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Volume 63. No. 249 © SS 2004

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2004

19 Gls killed in strike at U.S. base in Iraq

At least 24 killed in insurgent attack on dining hall in Mosul



U.S. soldiers help a wounded comrade after an insurgent attack on a dining facility during lunchtime Tuesday at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq. Officials said 24 people — a combination of U.S. military personnel, U.S. contractors, foreign national contractors and Iraqi army soldiers — were killed and 57 wounded.

STARS STRIPES COMING SOON



Ring in 2005 the European way



Catherine Zeta-Jones

Personality Parade

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ews Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Capsized water taxi: A water taxi that flipped over in Baltimore's Inner Harbor earlier this year in a sudden storm had too much weight aboard, according to a federal report.

Five passengers were thrown from the Seaport Taxi vessel in March, and died when it

capsized in winds exceeding 50 mph.

The National Transportation Safety
Board, in a report released Monday, said operators of the 36-foot Lady D followed passenger limits set by the Coast Guard, but outdated weight estimates were used.

Michael Jackson trial: A judge denied a defense bid to delay Michael Jackson's child molestation trial, saying it would be "a huge step backward" and clearing the way for the

trial to begin next month as planned.

In Santa Maria, Calif., Judge Rodney S Melville also refused to dismiss the case for what his defense lawyers had argued was "vindictive prosecution and outrageous government conduct.'

Jackson attorney Robert Sanger had asked Melville to postpone the trial for three months, allowing attorneys time to sort through 14,000 pages of evidence filed by prosecutors. The trial was scheduled to begin Jan. 31.

Lottery winner's granddaughter: The 17-year-old granddaughter of the winner of the largest U.S. lottery jackpot was found dead near her boyfriend's home, her body

wrapped in a sheet and plastic tarp.

"All I know is she OD'd and Brandon freaked out," Steve Crosier, the father of Brandi Bragg's boyfriend, Brandon, told re-Bragg, who lived in the nearby town of

Hurricane, was last seen alive Dec. 4. She was reported missing five days later by Jack Whittaker, who won a \$314.9 million jackpot on Christmas Day 2002 but has battled legal and other problems since then.

The cause of death was under investiga-

Ohio voting machine investigation: Election officials in Hocking County, Ohio, watched as a technician repeated a repair he had made to a vote tallying computer, then announced they had found no evidence of any sort of tampering, despite a congressman's request for an FBI probe

Observers, including a Green Party repre-sentative who had sought a presidential reount, agreed the procedure did not alter the Election Day vote total in the county. Hocking County Prosecutor Larry Beal said

Dick Clark's health: TV personality-producer Dick Clark will spend Christmas, and perhaps New Year's Eve, in a hospital where he's recovering from a mild stroke. his spokesman said Tuesday

Clark, who suffered the stroke Dec. 6, is out of the intensive care unit and "doing some rehab," said publicist Paul Shefrin.

He will remain hospitalized through Christmas, and will be watching his New Year's Eve special either from his hospital bed or at

Maryland arsons: A supporter of Patrick Walsh, Michael Everhart and Jeremy Parady is restrained during an altercation with a protester outside the Federal Courthouse in Greenbelt, Md., on Monday. Walsh, Everhart and Parady were in court and charged with arson in connection with the Dec. 6 fires at an upscale development in Indian Head, Md. Two more suspects were arrested Monday, but authorities say they have not found a motive for the arson that caused an estimated \$10 million in damage. Two possible motives, race and revenge, are among the theories that have emerged, an official has said.

home in Malibu, Calif., Shefrin said.

Suspected Mafia graveyard: Remains recently discovered buried in a suspected Mafia graveyard in Queens, N.Y., were those of two mob captains who were murdered in 1981, the FBI said Monday

An investigation by the FBI's Evidence Response Team and the city medical examiner determined the victims were Bonanno crime family captains Philip Giaccone and Dominick Trinchera, said Pasquale D'Amuro, head of the bureau's New York office.

Seattle church-abuse lawsuits: The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle has agreed to pay \$1.8 million to settle 12 claims of sexual abuse by priests.

Eleven of the settled cases involved the Rev. James McGreal, who was banned from the ministry and lives in a supervised church facility in Missouri.

The 12th claim involved the Rev. David Jaeger, who admitted in the mid-1990s that he inappropriately touched a 13-year-old boy at a youth camp in 1978. Jaeger is on adminis-

Business

AOL spam case: Federal prosecutors and a former America Online software engineer have negotiated a tentative plea agreement over charges he stole more than 92 million e-mail addresses and sold them to Internet spammers, according to two people familiar with the case.

Jason Smathers, 24, of Harper's Ferry, W.

Va., was scheduled to appear Tuesday in

court. In exchange for a guilty plea by Smathers to violating the U.S."Can Spam" law, prosecutors will recommend a fine and up to two years in prison, according to one person familiar with the agreement.

World

New Afghanistan Cabinet: President Hamid Karzai will demand that all members of his new Cabinet renounce their citizenship in any other country, despite a con-stitutional loophole that would allow them to serve for an interim period, his spokesman said Tuesday

Many of Afghanistan's political elite have acquired U.S. or British nationality while living abroad during more than two decades of near-constant warfare. Some have been reluctant to give up their status, earning criticism that they lack faith in Afghanistan's future.

Athens bus hijacking: Two Albanian housepainters apologized at their arraign-ment Monday for seizing a Greek bus last week and taking more than two dozen pas

Gaz Resuli and Leonard Murati, who were ordered to stand trial on charges of kidnapping and attempted murder, said they took the hostages and demanded a \$1.3 million ransom to start a business in Albania.

The men, both 24, were accused of hijacking the public bus Wednesday near Athens. The 18-hour standoff ended after police cordoned off the bus and negotiated the release of all 26 hostages on board. No one was injured. They each face up to 25 years in prison if

Stories and photo from wire services

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Correction

A story in Tuesday's editions about the rescheduling of spring break for some Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe misidentified the director of DODDS-Europe. Diana Ohman is the director.

Comics, horoscopes and advice - every day in Stars and Stripes







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Last-minute shoppers look for perfect gift



Stars and Stripes

Above: Bobby Love pays for a cartload of Christmas gifts Tuesday at the Toyland at Mainz-Kastel Storage Station in Germany. Love, who spent more than \$100 on toys, said his deployed wife instructed him to do the Christmas shopping a month ago, but he waited until the last minute to do it.

Right: John Crowe, of Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, looks over Toyland's shelves with 21-month-old son John Crowe Jr.



Stars and Stripes

NAPLES. Italy Peter Foulkrod scoured the aisles of the Navy Exchange at Agnano on Tuesday, looking for the perfect gift for mom.

"It's here son vear-old shopper. somewhere" said the

He just didn't know what it was just yet. "I want her to be happy on Christmas." To help accomplish the goal, mom

tagged along for last-minute shoppers Peter and dad, Petty Officer 1st Class David Foulkrod, to help point out the various things that just might make mom happy in four days.

"There are clothes and jewelry and perfume and leather, and fur, of course," Anna Foulkrod said. They shopped with ease, as there were no frenzied last-minute shoppers pounding the NEX aisles or swarming the cash registers.

The Internet played heavily for Doug Schnyder this year, as his wife completed weeks ago all their holiday shopping via the computer

"She did it all online," said Schnyder, an Army retiree. "All the shopping for six grandkids and four kids with spouses."

It has proven to be a good holiday shopping season for the Army and Air Force Ex-

change Service in Europe, officials report. "Overall, Europe's sales are running approximately 4 percent ahead" of projected revenue, AAFES spokeswoman Michelle

Mackey said. Topping the toy wish list for AAFES' sales was the newcomers Bratz collection of plastic Barbie-like dolls that are hip to times in their low-waisted jeans, pumps and wedge shoes, funky eye makeup and

voluptuous lips. And the bright yellow under-water-living sponge cartoon character SpongeBob SquarePants has been successful in every category, from toys to accessories, clothing, linens and more, Mackey said.

"Oversized plush bears and stuffed animals have performed surprisingly well.

AAFES' best sellers

Overall, Army and Air Force Exchange Service Christmas sales in Europe are running about 4 percent ahead of sales projections this year.

Here are some of the most popular

& Gift cards * Bratz collection of hip, plastic Bar-

bie-like dolls. * SpongeBob SquarePants items.

* Oversized plush bears and stuffed * The actress-and-twin-sisters duo of

Mary Kate and Ashley has been a hit, particularly with their new fragrance and gift sets * Traditional European Christmas

items such as nutcrackers, pyramids, candies and the German fruitcake Stol-* Ponchos, shawls and oversized and

novelty scarves * Boxed DVD sets, particularly those

Source: Army and Air Force Exchange Service

and [AAFES officials] can attribute some of that to returning [troops who were deployed] wanting to treat their wives, girl-friends and children," she said.

In the home-entertainment section boxed DVD sets, particularly those of television shows such as "Friends" and "24" were the winner in that category, Mackey

The weaker dollar on the economy sent some shoppers to the military exchange Thomas Liebchen, a German military

supply clerk stationed at the NATO base in Naples, and his wife, Barbara, eyed a traditional holiday nutcracker at the Navy Exchange as one of their last-minute knickknacks instead of shopping for it else-where. In fact, the German-husband and Canadian-wife duo liked one so much, they planned to keep it for themselves.

World of Barbie Tour showcases doll's history

By JESSICA INIGO

Stars and Stripes

FRANKFURT, Germany - There's no other fashionista who has reinvented herself more, splurged on expensive accessories as much, or gone solo just when the world thought she might get tied down for life

Barbie, who is in the middle of her German tour, is flaunting all the work she's had done on herself through the decades - displaying her expensive gowns and costumes while showing off her friends, family and new boy-

The World of Barbie tour is now at the Frankfurt Bockenheimer Depot, showcasing the history of Mattel's most famous doll and highlighting the little lady's ability to stay on the cutting edge of every trend. She went from a made-up vixen to a free-spirited athlete then moved out of the house into office work before venturing into more hazardous careers. There was Barbie the astronaut, the firefighter and the military pilot.

Even with all the time she spent on her profession, Barbie always managed to have enough free time to be a world-traveling princess. Hollywood star or the hit of the ball, according to Martin Schallermeir, the display coordinator for the German tour

The tour takes visitors through a history of each decade of Barbie and friends since she was first invented by Ruth Handler in 1957

Her inspiration, the German Lilli doll







Above left: Barbie and her pal Ken are on display at the World of Barbie Tour exhibit at the Frankfurt Bockenheimer Depot. The exhibit features Barbies from the 1950s through today and is running until Jan 2. Above right: Exhibit coordinator Martin Schallermeir adjusts the hat on one of the Barbie dolls. Left: A large collection of Bridal Barbies are also on display.

which came out of the pages of a cartoon strip in the newspaper Das Bild, is on display as well, along with the history of how Handler wanted the American doll to inspire young girls for a better future

The showcase comes complete with a the-

ater room, where four different Barbie movies play, mainly in German, as well as a playroom with various types of toys course, Barbie. For more information, go to www.world-of-barbie.de.

F-mail Jessica Inigo at: inigoi@mail.estrines.osd.mil

Exhibit dates

Here are the dates of the World of Barbie tour in Germa-

■ Through Jan. 2 — Frankfurt Bockenheimer Depot ■ Jan. 5-16 — Passau, former

Lucullushallen ■ Jan. 19-23 — Straubing

Neue Messehalle ■ Jan. 26 to Feb. 13 — Stut-

tgart Römerkastell Feb. 16-21 — Konstanz Konzil

■ Feb. 23 to March 6 -Leipzig Handelshof ■ March 9-13 — Memmingen

Stadthalle

■ March 16-20 — Bamberg

■ March 23 to April 10 — Köln Stadthalle Mühlheim

All shows are open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. except Christmas Eve, when it will be closed. Ticket prices Monday to Friday are: Group of up to 10 people, 5 euros each; Children, 7 euros; Students, 8 euros; general admission, 9.50 euros; Family package, 24 euros. Prices increase by 2 euros on weekends.

U.S. air carriers switch to euro-only sales

BY WARD SANDERSON Stars and Strines

In January, American air carriers will cease to accept dollars as navment from customers in Germany — a move that makes that country fall in step with its neighbors, but has some travel agents fearing that the fall of the greenback against the euro may result in pricier tickets.

"It's simply cost-efficient," said Günter Müller, who manages the German office of the Internation al Air Transport Association, the

airlines' trade organization "We can save money for the

American carriers," he said. But Müller said the change shouldn't impact the customer. They can still pay in dollars if a travel agency chooses to accept them. The agency would just have to pay the airline in euros. tice everywhere else in the world anyway, and that Germany is late in joining up.

But with so many Americans living in Germany, the airline association had allowed agencies to sell in dollars.

Germany's ABC Travel Service took advantage of that to attract American business, even to the point of accepting checks, in dollars, from U.S. troops.

"It was a specific market the military market," said Herbert Blesinger, who heads the ABC chain. "Now it's finished."

Blesinger expects the price of tickets back to the United States via American carriers to rise 15 percent to 20 percent when they are converted to a euro rate, depending on the airline.

"The dollar is very low," Blesinger said. "Automatically

price of airline tickets for flights between the United States and Germany will be in euros, not dollars.

eurus, not dollars.

For example, a flight between Frankfurt, Germany, and Washington, D.C., that is priced at \$863 will be 628.43 euros at the current rate

If the dollar continues to fall ainst the euro and the price of a ticket remains steady in euros, passengers will need more dollars to pay for tickets

— an increase of about \$12 for each euro cent.

the price goes higher."

Blesinger said the change hurts his office directly, too, because he'll have to handle money differently. He can't give U.S. cash to the airlines anymore, so he'll

if he wants to take dollars

"What we are working on right now is to accept dollars, convert to euro and pay the carriers in euro," he said. "But it's a risk."

The reason is the chance of a dollar drop in between the time the customer pays and ABC visits the bank to convert those dollars into euros

Conversion could also take more from American customers who nay with credit cards, one agency manager worried.

"When the customer pays with a credit card, it will automatically be converted," said Helga Bernd, who manages the SatoTravel office at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. But the airline will also have converted its U.S.-set prices to euros for sale to customers in Germany,

meaning two conversions. "I'd assume that with the high euro-dollar exchange rate, it will have a negative impact in pric-

ing," Bernd said. She also assumes the change is a response on the airlines' part to

the low value of the dollar. However,a spokeswoman for the International Air Transport Association's executive office in Geneva, said the change is only an internal one.

an internal one.

"It's the way in which we do
our business," she said. "It's
back-office-type changes, not
front-office-type changes."

one also said Germany's special situation was at odds with the rest of the industry.

"IATA favors standardization," she said. "We try to work as much as possible in an [European Union]-type spirit.

'It's to make things simpler and better. We don't make changes for change's sake.

E-mail reporter Ward Sanderson at sandersonw@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Self-heating coffee to hit stores

self-heating can

is less bulky, is

disposable and

carries no "flame

sianature."

By PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

Workers in the United States often see their morning commute as a battle. Soon they'll have technology similar to what the military is using to aid in the fight.

USA Today reported in its Monday editions that beginning Jan. 2, consumers

can buy a 10-ounce container of Wolfgang Puck gourmet latte at the store and heat it by pressing a button, without using electricity or appliances

How does the can do it? A single step mixes calcium oxide (quicklime) and water. It heats the coffee to 145 degrees in six minutes and stays hot for 30 min

It's much like a technology being tested by Natick Soldier Systems for inclusion in Meals-Ready-To-Eat. The "hot beverage bag" is to be fielded in 2005

The military's version is less bulky, is disposable and carries no "flame signature." that is, cannot be detected by an

Puck is the owner of Los Angeles eater ies Spago and Chinois. He has licensed his name to WP Beverage Partners, a beverage firm. WP has linked up with OnTech a technology specialist, that designed the

Nestlé has tested a similar technology with Nescafé in Europe, and smaller companies have tested it in Asia.

"We investigated that technology 15 years ago," said Daine Wood, a scientist with the Combat Feeding Directorate in Natick Mass

"They used it for sake [an alcoholic beverage] in Asia. Commut-The military's ers got it from a vending machine on the train and version of the had a drink on the way

> Retail grocer Kroger is so convinced the product will be a hit, it will offer the cans in its 2,530 stores - and negotiated a deal to be the only seller until mid-February

'There's nothing like it on the market. savs John Spalding, who oversees all coffee

sales at Kroger, told USA Today. The Defense Commissary Agency could not say whether they would try to

carry the item Army and Air Force Exchange Service spokesman Judd Anstey said AAFES is in the process of contacting the vendor to

see what the plans are for selling to other The Puck coffee will retail for about

E-mail Pat Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil



COURTESY OF BEVERAGE SPECTRUM MAGAZINE

The new Wolfgang Puck self-heating latte heats a cup of coffee in six minutes with no external equipment or power, using technology similar to what the military has been testing for years.

Poll: Americans support staying in Iraq despite doubts Iraq to help with upcoming elections.

WASHINGTON - Despite growing doubts, most Americans still support keeping U.S. military troops in Iraq until the country is stabilized, according to polls released Monday.

More than half — 56 percent — say the United States should keep troops in Iraq until it is stable, according to a poll by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. Forty percent said troops should be brought home as soon as possible.

That's about the same level of support that Pew has found all year for keeping troops in Iraq until it's stabilized. An ABC News-Washington Post poll got essentially

retailers

"Even for critics of the decision to go to war, pulling out is seen as further increasing the risks of terrorism and raising the threat to the United States," said Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center

Four in 10 said they approve of the way the United States has handled the situation in Iraq, while almost six in 10 disapprove. according to a CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll. A year ago, almost two-thirds ap-proved of the way Iraq was being handled.

Half in the Gallup poll say the situation is worse than a year ago, while 20 percent say it's better. People were evenly divided on whether more troops should be sent to

About four in 10, 42 percent, in the ABC News-Washington Post poll said they approve of Bush's handling of Iraq, while 57 percent disapprove. Six in 10 said the elections scheduled for late January should be held on schedule, even though most say Iraq is not ready for the elections to be held. The Pew poll of 2,000 adults was taken

Dec. 1-16 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points, larger for subgroups. The Gallup poll of 1,002 adults was taken Dec. 17-19 and the ABC-Post poll of 1,004 adults was taken Dec. 16-19.

Both tpolls have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Financial company flooded by messages

BY LEO SHANE III Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Lawyers handling refunds in the First Command Financial Planning case have received hundreds of e-mails in the past week regarding the pay-outs, mainly from troops serving overseas.

Wayne M. Secore, the attorney administering the restitution program, said his staff is working to respond to those soldiers and other affected by the case as quickly as possible. But troops have until March 15 to recoun their losses which he said leaves plenty of time for officials to handle the requests. In addition, that deadline can be extended if troops can't file in time because of unusual hardship, such as serving in a combat zone, he said.

Last week, First Command agreed to refund about \$4 million to certain customers who bought mutual funds from the firm between 1999 and this year. The company mostly caters to military personnel, and securities investigators accused them of misleading investors about service charges in their systematic investment plans.

The company no longer offers those in-vestments, officials announced last week. First Command's other financial services such as life insurance and banking programs - were not affected by the settle-

The refunds will be available only to customers who bought and sold their systematic investment plans between 1999 and this

year, Secore said. Eligible individuals should be receiving letters detailing how to obtain the payouts in the next few weeks. Secore said troops with additional questions can contact him at secore@secore

waller.com Investors who still hold their First Com-

mand plans may be eligible for arbitration to recover certain service fees. Those claims will be handled through the National Association of Securities Dealers, the brokerage industry's self-policing organiza-

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

19 Gls killed in Mosul attack

At least 24 dead in assault on U.S. base

BY MICHAEL MCDONOUGH The Associated Press

BAGHDAD - Nineteen U.S. soldiers were killed in an attack on a U.S. and Iraqi base near the northern city of blast, the U.S. military said. Three other soldiers of unknown nationality also died, a military spokesman said in Bagh-

It was the deadliest single incident for U.S. troops since the start of the war in Iraq

But Lt. Col. Paul Hastings, spokesman for Task Force Olympia in Mosul, said 24 people died and 57 were wounded. It was not immediately possible to reconcile the different death counts.

"The number is very chaotic. we've had different numbers." Hastings said.

The attack came the same day that British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a surprise visit to Baghdad and described the ongoing violence in Iraq as a "battle between democracy and terror.'

Halliburton spokeswoman Wendy Hall said seven of the dead were from its KBR subsidiary or its subcontractors. Halliburton and its subcontractors have lost 62 personnel while performing services under our contracts in the Kuwait-Iraq region,

Jeremy Redmon, a reporter for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch embedded with the troops in Mosul said the people in the tent had just sat down to eat at Forward Operating Base Marez.

Officials could not break down the toll of dead or wounded among the groups. Reports also differed as to the cause of the blast at the camp, which is based outside the predominantly Sunni Muslim city about 220 miles north of Baghdad.

The base, also known as the al-Ghizlani military camp, is used by both U.S. troops and the interim Iraqi government's security

Although military officials initially said rockets or mortar



RICHMOND (VA.) TIMES-DISPATCH/A

A hole in the roof of a tent at Forward Operating Base Marez lights the smoke mor ents after an attack on a dining facility Tuesday in Mosul, Iraq. U.S. officials said 24 people were killed and 57 were wounded in the attack, occurring as troops had just sat down for lunch.

rounds struck the camp. Hastings said it was still under investiga-

"We do not know if it was a mor-tar or a place explosive," he said, describing it as a "single explo-

Bill Nemitz, a columnist with the Portland Press Herald embedded with the Maine National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion, told CNN there was a concrete dining hall under construction that was supposed to be finished by Christmas. He said he heard "a lot of discussion" among the troops about the vulnerability of the tent.

Hastings told CNN that "there is a level of vulnerability when vou go in there[the tent] and vou don't feel like there's a hard hard roof over your head, and when there's mortar attacks and explosions that happen, there is a level of vulnerability.

The Ansar al-Sunnah Army claimed responsibility for the at tack in a statement on the Internet. It said the attack was a "martyrdom operation" targeting a dining tent in the al-Ghizlani camp.

Ansar al-Sunna is believed to be a fundamentalist group that wants to turn Iraq into an Islamic state like Afghanistan's former Taliban regime. The Sunni Muslim group claimed responsibility for beheading 12 Nepalese hostages and other recent attacks in

Mosul was the scene of the deadliest single incident for U.S. troops in Iraq. On Nov. 15, 2003, two Black Hawk helicopters collided over the city, killing 17 sol-diers and injuring five. The crash occurred as the two choppers maneuvered to avoid ground fire

from insurgents. Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city, was relatively peaceful in the im-mediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime last year. But insurgent attacks in the largely Sunni Arab area have increased dramatically in the past year and particularly since the U.S.-led military operation in November to retake the restive city of Fallujah from militants.

Also Tuesday, Iraqi security forces repelled another attack by insurgents trying to seize a police station in the center of the city. the U.S. military said.

SEE MOSUL ON PAGE 6

Seasons Greetings, Sgt. Delbert Jensen

Your friends and co-workers at Noramco want to wish you a Happy Holiday!



STARS STRIPES. Your Hometown Newspaper

www.stripes.com

'I can't hear,' one soldier cried

Editor's note: Jeremy Reda Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch reporter embed ded with U.S. troops, was at Forward Operating Base Marez when it came under attack.

BY JEREMY REDMON

Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch FORWARD OPERATING

BASE MAREZ, Iraq — It was a brilliant, sunny day with blue skies and warmer than usual weather in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Hundreds of U.S. soldiers had

just sat down for lunch in their giant chow hall tent.

It was about noon Tuesday when insurgents hit their tent with a suspected rocket attack, killing at least 24 people, including two soldiers from the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion. Fifty-seven people were reported wounded; civilians may have been among them.

The force of the explosions knocked soldiers off their feet and out of their seats. A fireball enveloped the top of the tent, and shrapnel sprayed into the

Amid the screaming and thick SEE MAREZ ON PAGE 6

that quick-thinking soldiers turned their lunch tables upside down, placed the wounded on them and gently carried them into the parking lot.

Medics rushed into the tent and hustled the rest of the wounded out on stretchers.

Scores of troops crammed into concrete bomb shelters out-Others wobbled around the

tent and collapsed, dazed by the blast "I can't hear! I can't hear!"

ne female soldier cried as a friend hugged her.

Near the front entrance to the chow hall, troops tended a soldier with a gaping head wound. Within minutes, they zipped him into a black body bag. Three more bodies were in the parking lot.

Soldiers scrambled back into the hall to check for more wounded.

The explosions blew out a huge hole in the roof of the tent. Puddles of bright red blood, lunch trays and overturned ta-bles and chairs covered the



Soldiers of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division Stryker Brigade Combat Team run past a Stryker vehicle during Operation Indy in Mosul, Iraq, on Nov. 11.

Army looks to give Stryker a face lift

BY LISA BURGESS Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Army officials learned some important lessons when its first Stryker Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq this fall that are helping the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team from Wainwright, Alaska, due to go into the country next summer.

Soldiers have suggested small improvements that have already been made, such as new seat belts and interior hand-holds

But there are larger issues still at stake, such as shaving the vehicle's weight, its potential to rollover and trap soldiers, and whether the current "cage" armor is effective, critics sav.

Army leaders recently attempted to change such impressions by holding a media video teleconference with a dozen Stryker commanders from four locations

Lt. Col. Steven Townsend, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 2 Infantry Division who spoke from Fort Lewis, Wash., called the Stryker "a heck of a vehicle."

"Soldiers know this vehicle is not perfect, they do know and believe it's the best vehicle available and they have it to use today," Townsend, whose was the first Stryker Brigade Combat Team to deploy to Iraq, in October 2003, said during the roundtable.

Commanders at the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which is due to go into the country next summer, are busy using lessons learned from the first Stryker brigade in Iraq, brigade commander Col. Michael Shields said during the roundtably

The lessons learned from their predecessors "are really helping." Shields said.

ing," Shields said.

Many of the lessons are simple, such as the need for additional handholds welded inside the Stryker.

Commanders in Iraq also real-

ized that the original seat belts were not long enough to accommodate a soldier wearing the new individual body armor and other bulky items on his person.

With the seat belts uncomfortably tight, soldiers simply were not strapping in while the vehicle was moving, commanders said, increasing the danger during collisions, explosions or rollovers.

With new seat belts, the problem has been solved, Fuller said. Commanders in Iraq also determined that the Stryker's "bird cage" slatted armor was not making the common armored vehicle issue of rollovers, even worse.

The armor, designed to defeat rocket propelled grenades, acts like a baseball catcher's mask: the explosives bounce off or do damage to the armor, not the vehi-

The cage armor also is sufficiently effective to withstand most improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, and RPGs, another question raised by critics in the past, Army leaders said.

Lt. Col. Gordie Flowers, commander of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, said during his year in Iraq, more than 50 percent of his Strykers were hit with rocket propelled grenades and EDs, "the No. 1 and No. 2 weapons used against us," with no resulting fatalities.

The slat armor may be effective, but at 4,500 pounds, it does unquestionably and significantly add to the Stryker's basic 19-ton

And weight remains a serious issue for the Stryker brigade, which Army planners originally said would have the capability of deployment by C-130 transport aircraft, anywhere in the world within 96 hours.

"The C-130 transportability remains "an important metric, and we'll continue to pursue it," Fuller said. "We're working to reduce the [Stryker's] weight."

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: bur gessl@stripes.osd.mil

Mosul: Blair in Iraq amid deadly attack

MOSUL, FROM PAGE 5

During his visit, Blair held talks with Allawi and Iraqi election officials, whom he called heroes for carrying out their work despite attacks. Three members of Iraq's election commission were dragged from a car and

were dragged from a car and killed this week in Baghdad. "I said to them that I thought they were the heroes of the new Iraq that's being created, because here are people who are risking this live ware durt people are

Iraq that's being created, because here are people who are risking their lives every day to make sure that the people of Iraq get a chance to decide their own destiny, "Blair said at a joint news conference with Allawi.

Blair, who has paid a political price for going to war in Iraq, defended the role of Britain's 8,000 troops by referring to terrorism.

"If we defeat it here, we deal it a blow worldwide," he said. "If Iraq is a stable and democratic country, that is good for the

Middle East, and what is good for the Middle East is actually good for the world, including Britain."

for the world, including Britain."

Blair, whose trip to Iraq hadn't been disclosed for security rea-

sons, urged Iraqis to back next month's elections. Allawi said his government was

committed to holding the elections as scheduled, despite calls for their postponement owing to the violence.

"We have always expected that

"We have always expected that the violence would increase as we approach the elections," Allawi said. "We now are on the verge, for the first time in history, of having democracy in action in this country."

It was Blair's first visit to Bagh-

dad and his third to Iraq since the dictator Saddam Hussein was toppled in April 2003. Blair visited British troops stationed around the southern Iraqi city of Basra in mid-2003 and in January. Blair flew to Basra later Tuesday.

In other violence Tuesday, five American soldiers and an Iraqi civilian were wounded when the Humvee they were traveling in was hit by a car bomb near Hawija, 150 miles north of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

John Lumpkin and Slobodan Lekic of The Associated Press contributed to this story in Washington and Baghdad, respectively

Marez: Battalion feels loss

MAREZ, FROM PAGE 5

Sgt. Evan Byler, of the 276th, steadied himself on one of the concrete bomb shelters. He was eating chicken tenders and macaroni when the bomb hit. The blast knocked him out of his chair. When the smoke cleared, Byler took off his shirt and wrapped it around a seriously wounded sol-

Byler held the bloody shirt in his hand, not quite sure what to do with it.

"It's not the first close call I have had here," said Byler, a Fauquier County, Va., resident who survived a blast from an improvised explosive device while riding in a vehicle earlier this

Byler started walking back to his base when he spotted a soldier collapse from shock on the side of the road. Byler and Lt. Shawn Otto, also of the 276th, put the grieving soldier on a passing pickThe 276th, with about 500 troops, had made it a year without losing a soldier and is preparing

to return home in about a month.
"We almost made it. We almost
made it to the end without getting
somebody killed," Otto said.
At least two other soldiers with

At least two other soldiers with the 276th were injured, but it was not clear how serious their wounds are

Maj James Zollar, the unit's acting commander, spoke to more than a dozen of his officers in a voice thick with emotion. He urged them to keep their troops focused on their missions.

Zollar eventually turned the emergency meeting over to Chaplain Eddie Barnett. He led the group in prayer.

"Help us now, God, in this time of this very tragic circumstance," Barnett said. "We pray for your healing upon our wounded sol-

With heads hung low, the soldiers trudged outside. They had work to do.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Pres

As of Monday, at least 1,304 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,021 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civil-

The AP count is four higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Monday. The British military has re-

The British military has reported 75 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia,

Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,166 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 912 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by

The latest deaths reported the military:

No new deaths reported.

■ No new deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

No new identifications re-

ported.

Blast in Mosul

An explosion at a U.S. base in the northern city of Mosul on Tuesday caused multiple casualties.



DURCE: ESI

Statement by Brig. Gen. Carter Ham, commander of Task Force Olympia in Mosul, Iraq:

"There has been an incident at one of our bases in southwest Mosul. There was a single large explosion in a dining facility. We don't yet know the source of that explosion. The investigation is ongoing by explosives experts to determine ... the source. "The attack today had a very

"The attack today had a very negative effect against multinational forces and our Iraqi partners here in Mosul.

"So far, more than 20 have been killed, and more than 60 wounded. The killed include U.S. military personnel, U.S. contractors, foreign national contractors and Iraqi Army. The wounded also come from those areas, too.

"We are in the process now of making notifications to the families and units of those who were killed or wounded in today's

killed or wounded in today's tragic attack. "Our hearts go out to the families and our fellow soldiers who

lies and our fellow soldiers who lost comrades in arms today, who lost husbands and fathers and brothers, both Americans and Iraqis. It is, indeed, a very, very sad day.

"But I would also say, in their

"But I would also say, in their typical magnificent manner, U.S. soldiers today responded to that attack just as we would have expected them to: with unselfish caring for one another. It was a heartwarming experience to see wounded soldiers caring for those more severely wounded.

"And in the chaos that followed that attack, there was no differentiation by nationalities, whether one wore a uniform or civilian clothes, they were all brothers in arms taking care of one another.

"And I think that's something that all Americans, and indeed all Iraqis, can be very proud of. "I ask you on this sad day that

you keep us in your thoughts, your hearts and your prayers. There are those who lost many dear friends today. It's a sad day in Mosul

"But as they always do, soldiers will come back from that, and they will do what they can do best, to honor those who have fallen today and that is to see this very important mission through to successful completion.

"That's what we owe you, the American people, and that's what we owe the people of Iraq. And that is exactly what we shall do

"Thank you. May God bless America, and may God preserve peace in Iraq." Cassie

Veronica



News from the North Pole

SANTA INDICATES THAT THE FOLLOWING BOYS AND GIRLS HAVE BEEN VERY GOOD THIS YEAR AND WILL SOON BE RECEIVING A PERSONALIZED NOTE FROM SANTA!



Isaac Adams Victoria Adams Derek Alemany Christina Almario **Dustin Anderson** Hannah Anderson Lauren Apo Tasha Archibald Tanva Archibald Talva Archibald Chandra Barck Anthony Barton Christopher Bender Erin Bender Vanessa Braun Jamee Brower Kayla Carter **Emily Cissell** Quartney Cohen Caryl Cohen Nia Cohen Chanelle Cohen Mia Conrad **Tucker Curry** Maya Degenhart Carson Degenhart D'Artagnon Dussault Trent Dussault David Ebbs Michael Ebbs Keshawn Ferguson Alexxis Ferguson Gus Fields Shailyn Finnegan Barak Finnegan Jacob Finnegan Joshua Finnegan Brianna Fraher William Fraher Zarius Gardner Thomas Garner Zoey Goris Caitlin Grace Alex Grace Bethany Grace Lindsay Gray James Griffith Alex Hammond Joey Hammond William Harris Tim Harrison Cody Hartman Alisonn Hartman Michael Jackson Dan Miguel Janolo

Ethon Johns

Lucas Johnson

Ann Johnson Ireland Johnson Chris Klimczak Samantha Klimczak Ben Klimczak Alex Levine Daisy Longobardi Chantal Longobardi John Lopez Sara Lonez Heather Marholz B.J. Mellott Samantha Munoz Neely O'Grady **Dundrey Peoples** Tessa Pirkola Lyla Pirkola Joshua Price Abigail Price Shannon Provost Cory Reed Trenton Riggs Evan Riggs Keegan Riley McKenna Riley Nathaniel Riley Jasmyn Rosser Deanna Saccone lan Sellers Noah Sharpley David Shekey Nathan Shekey Brandon Shields Grant Sii Leeza Solomon Katrina Stebbins Raynard Taylor Asha Taylor Megan Thompson Marc Thorne Michael Torres Ashley Torres Lilian Trevino Thomas Valenzuela Lexy VanderPoel Alexis Villarreal Breah Villarreal Javla Weaver J.J. Weaver

Jalen Wells

Lauren Zapata

Denise Zapata

Madison

Victoria

Lauren

Aiden

Isaac

Nathan Samuel Mariah Ashlan Allison Derrick Aleiandra Huter Madison Liam Adrianna Jennifer Evan Kourtney .lamil Collin Taylor Lydia Alexis Alex Nathaniel Zachary Summer Jasmine Cassandra Armando Kaleila Gabrielle Ashley Abigail Destany Dilan Adriana Havanna Shelby Lindsey Ben Clarissa Mikayla Kenan West Ruislip School Mrs. Weiland's 1st grade Jessie Beck **Emily Caverly** Emma Crowers **Brandon Cummings** Nicholas Dauksys Christian Fish George Ochoa Carolyn Olmsted Kristi Pricolo Nicholas Quigley McKenzie Walsh Aaron Christina

Rainbow Elementary School Lindsey Aclorjan Gabby Adeotl Jessica Czarnecki Dushaune Duffy Stephanie Kather Tyler Kittell Ginette Kronk Bekah Ann Lathery Catrin Phillips Cody Schultz Brenna Sebastian Felicity Jeannine Page Tevin Luigi Menwith Hill CDC Vanessa Almanzor Christian Belcher Abigail Belcher Aaron Bell Tiana Bell Jameesha Bentley Chase Capoeman Deklan Clay Lewis Dargan Andrew DiFranco Annaliese Fleet Colleen Gammell Lauren Gonzales Jasinea Gray Kellin Hodgen Emily Hoinowski Andrew Kelly Natriela Lopez-Cuzman Keanu Lyons Mariah McCreary Emily McNabb Julia Meadows Tony Meadows Ryan Moore **Daniel Morales** Michael Mulcahy Savannah Quinn Sean Skahan Jasiah Smith Sean Wilhelm Ben Wilson

Shawn Wilson

Thomas Zimmerman

Caterina Counga Jaylon Jones James Matthews Devin Shoemaker

Aviano Elementary Mrs. Johnson's 123 class Joey Dietege Donte Galloup Katelyn Grueber Brandon Guteriez Victoria Howerin Ciara Janas Alana Lewendowski Rusty Lym Justyne Metcalf Jacob Ryan Doninic Shaima Douglas Steventon Dennis Takashima Margis Traylor Khambre Young Boeblingen Elementary Mrs. Taylor's 2nd grade Rick Connor D. Emma Holly Bethany Kevin Matthew Justin Connor J. Max Jacob Mackenzie Dennis Alecs Bailey James van Dierendonck Elementary School Mrs. Schubert's 2nd grade Jackie Armstrong Rachel Barahona John Bridges Alex Broome

Julia

Jack

Sean Cruz

Kiana Keys

Cassandra Verzeni Brendon Wade

Andre

IN THE WORLD

Nations agree to united security in Mediterranean

BY JAMEY KEATEL

PARIS — Defense ministers and leading military officiant from 10 European and North African nations agreed Tuesday to step up security cooperation in the Mediterranean basin, choosing to focus first on improving maritime surveillance.

It was the first time that the so-called "5 plus 5" group of nations took on issues like curbing the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants toward Europe, fighting terrorism and joining forces to brace for natural disasters in the region

"We must face jointly a certain number of challenges — the fight against terrorism, against the flow of various traffic and against ecological catastrophes," Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie of France said at a joint news conference after the two-hour meeting.

The initiatives, to begin next spring, are to focus first on maritime surveillance and how militaries can boost their roles in air security and natural disaster response, the group said in a joint statement.

The 10 nations plan to carry out joint military exercises to prepare for oil spills at sea, exchange experts' views on maritime surveillance and add a military role to border controls. The ministers said delegations of military experts from the region would meet twice to oversee cooperation, and the ministers are to meet annually to check up on the efforts.

The group, composed of five North African nations and five European nations on the southern rim of the Mediterranean, was set up in 1990 as a means of holding an "informal dialogue" on concerns considered vital to the re-

Foreign ministers of the group met in Algeria last month, tackling issues such as illegal immigration and terrorism.

The forum is one of several that aims to bridge the gap between Europe and its neighbors on the other side of the Mediterranean. It aims to contribute to the security and economic integration of the sometimes volatile region and push forward a larger process of cooperation between Europe and

its neighbors to the south.

The "5 plus 5" group is made up of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Malta on the European side and Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Libya, all

North African nations.

The group was stalled for years, partly because of internal turmoil in Algeria, where violence from an Islamic insurgency left an estimated 120,000 dead, and partly because of sanctions on I thus.

New Potter book coming

LONDON — The sixth novel in J.K. Rowling's blockbuster Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," will go on sale in Britain and America on July 16, publishers said Tuesday.

Rowling, 39, noted that while she is pregnant with her third child, she has had the time "needed to tinker with the manuscript to my satisfaction and I am as happy as I have ever been with the end result. I only hope you feel it was worth the wait when you finally read it."

Twins swap for escape

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — An 18-year-old immate, serving a 10-month sentence for assault and robbery, walked out of the Kronoberg-Jail, located in the same building that houses the headquarters for Stockholm's police department, undetected on Monday after a visit by his twin brother. The two siblings, neither of whom were named, managed to switch their outfils without anyone noticing.

Faced with the prospect of spending the night in jail, his brother admitted the ruse to prison guards. The visiting brother was questioned and released, but could face charges of aiding in a prison escape.

From The Associated Press



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder talk Tuesday on an Inter-City Express high speed train on their way to Gottorf palace in the northern German village of Schleswig.

Announcement of train deal caps Putin, Schroeder talks

BY TONY CZUCZKA The Associated Press

SCHLESWIG, Germany — German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a \$2 billion deal Tuesday to bring German high-speed trains to Russia's national rail-

The agreement highlighted Germany's push to expand business with Russia.

pand ousness with Russia.

Schroeder was intent on turning the meeting with

Putin into a success, despite recent tensions between Moscow and the West over the Ukrainian

vote and Sunday's auction of Yukos' Yuganskneftegaz unit to a previously unknown company.

"Trade between Germany and Russia is developing very dynamically," Schroeder said. "Russia is an enormously important market in which German Under the train deal, Germany's Siemens AG will

provide Russia with 60 InterCity Express trains, initially to run between Moscow and St. Petersburg.
The trains will be partially built in Russia, and the agreement includes an option for 90 more trains, Sie-

mens chief executive Heinrich von Pierer said.
Schroeder gave Putin a firsthand look at the trains
Tuesday, taking him on a 70-mile trip from Hamburg to the northern town of Schleswig for the final

stop in two days of official German-Russian talks. Schroeder and Putin met at a 16th-century castle near the Danish border where Czar Peter the Great once stopped by during a military campaign.

Like other recent meetings between German and Russian leaders, Putin's visit was designed to show that ties between him and Schroeder extend beyond formalities to friendship.



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Jewish settlers in Gaza touching nerve with **Holocaust reference**

BY JOSEF FEDERMAN The Associated Press

JERUSALEM - Some Jewish settlers said Tuesday that they will be wearing orange Star of David patches — similar to those the Nazis forced Jews to pin to their lapels — in an escalation of protests against a planned Gaza

withdrawal. The campaign stirred an unroar in Israel, which gave refuge to large numbers of Holocaust survivors after World War II. About 250,000 survivors still live in Israel, and mention of the Nazi genocide in a public forum remains an extremely sensitive sub-

Settler activists in Gaza said they would distribute the orange stars this weekend, although a handful of Gaza residents displayed the badges on Tuesday.

"We want to shock the nation," Miriam Freiman, a 67-year-old Holocaust survivor who lives in the Neve Dekalim settlement in

They succeeded quickly, touching a raw nerve. Images of a Gaza woman wearing the star on her Israeli newspaper, and radio shows discussed the settler campaign nonstop.

Former Israeli Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau denounced the initiative. "Spare us this return to the nightmares of the past and leave the Holocaust in its proper place," he said. "The deliberate murder of 6 million Jews is such a sacred and significant thing that it cannot be compared with abs

lutely anything else in the world." Lau is a Holocaust survivor. The official Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center urged the settlers to refrain from using the stars. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a human rights group that focuses on Holocaust issues, ac-cused the settlers of cheapening

the memory of Holocaust victims "The Nazi term 'resettlement was to take Jews from their homes to be mass murdered. They're trying to create imagery that this is the same resettle-ment," said Efraim Zuroff, head of the Wiesenthal Center's Jerusalem office, who himself lives in a West Bank settlement, "We're not headed to Auschwitz, with all due



Monday following a news conference in Jerusalem. Israeli settler leaders on Monda backed a call to resist the planned evacuation of settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Arafat successor calls for peace

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Marking the end of mourning for Yasser Arafat, his emerging successor said Tuesday that he remains committed to a peace deal with Israel that would produce a Pales-

tinian state with Jerusalem as a capital.

Mahmoud Abbas spoke at Arafat's old headquarters, to which the Palestinian leader was confined for nearly three years until just days before his Nov. 11 death at a Paris hospital. Tuesday marked the end of the 40-day Muslim mourning

Abbas, the PLO chief, is the front-runner in Jan. 9 elections to replace Arafat as Palestinian Authority president, which would seal his status as Arafat's successor

'We are standing here today to reiterate to the world that we are committed to the choice of just peace, to achieve the rights of our people," Abbas

From The Associated Press

Digestive organs transplant a first at China hospital

BY ELAINE KURTENBACH The Associated Press

SHANGHAI, China - A Chinese woman has received a new intestinal tract and four other organs in the first successful transplant of its kind in Asia, a Shanghai hospital said Tuesday.

Lu Xiao, a 38-year-old woman from Shanghai, suffered from polyps that covered her entire digestive system, and some had turned cancerous, the Shang-hai Ruijin Hospital said.

In a 14-hour-long operation on Nov. 14 that involved 30 doctors and nurses, Lu received a new intestinal tract, stomach, spleen, liver and pancreas, said Wang Min, a hospital spokeswoman.

All the organs came from one donor, whose identi-ty could not be disclosed because the family request-

ty count not be accused to excluse the farminy request-ed confidentiality, Wang said.

Lu was taken off a respirator two days after the op-eration and has been recovering well, Wang said.

"She's able to take water and other fluids now," she

So far. Lu has not suffered from any organ rejection. However, the risk of future rejection or infection remains.

It was unclear why the hospital waited over a

month to announce the operation.

Multiple organ transplants involving the intestinal tract initially were more common among chil-dren, but in recent years the success rate for such transplants among adults has improved.

A report on state-run television showed doctors handling bags of blood and surgeons at work in the operating theater. "Only about 20 adults around the world have received this kind of surgery, many of them in the United States, and only one in Europe. This is the first time for Asia," said Li Hongwei, the hospital's director.

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IN THE STATES

Holiday discounts expected

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Retailers are expected to increase discounting in the final days before Christmas after a late-buying binge failed to materialize during the last weekend before the holiday.

end before the holiday.

"You will really see some dramatic desperation discounting" this week, said Burt Flickinger III, managing partner at Strategic Resource Group, a New Yorkbased industry consultant.

Such potential discounting is fueling worries that industry profits could be hurt in the fourth quarter. Flickinger estimated that profit margins will be cut by 3 percent to 5 percent in the fourth quarter as a result.

Merchants needed a hefty sales surge this past weekend to recoup lost business after seeing a slow start to a holiday selling season that never gathered steam.

Now, they'll have to rely even more heavily on procrastinators during the final days before Christmas, as well as post-holiday sales. Merchants also hope their bottom lines will be boosted by the redemption of gift cards, which are only recorded as sales when they are redeemed.

ShopperTrak, which tracks sales at 30,000 retail outlets, reported on Monday that total sales fell 3.3 percent for Saturday and Sunday, compared with the same two days last year.

Luxury stores — which have enjoyed robust sales as their

Study: Teen drug abuse declining

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Youth smoking and drug abuse declined again this year, concludes a federal study that also found marked progress over the last decade in persuading teens to avoid cigarettes and illicit substances.

The smoking rate among younger teens is half what it was in the mid-1990s, and drug use by that group is down by one-third, says the University of Michigan study, done for the National Institute on Drug Abuse and released Tuesday. Less dramatic strides have been made among older teens. Altogether, gains in 2004 over 2003 were modest. Researchers

Altogether, gains in 2004 over 2003 were modest. Researchers were bothered by increases in the use of inhalants such as glue, aerosols and the pain-control narcotic OxyContin. Use of most other drugs declined or held steady.

This was the eighth consecutive year that smoking rates among surveyed teens dropped. "We know that young people

"We know that young people have come to see eigarette smoking as more dangerous, while they also have become less accepting of cigarette use, and these changes continued into 2004," said Lloyd Johnston, lead researcher for the Momitoring the Future study.

well-heeled customers have benefited from the economy's recovery — had the best performance over the weekend, despite offering only selected discounts.

In contrast, mid-priced merchants — appealing to customers more vulnerable to higher heating costs — are being forced to

pull in customers with big discounts and expanded hours.

J.C. Penney Co. Inc., for example, will be opening at 7 a.m. from Wednesday through Friday, offer-

ing deals on jewelry and coats.

The Saturday before Christmas is traditionally the busiest day of the year for merchants.



Holiday shoppers crowd the sidewalk along Michigan Avenue in Chicago on the final weekend before Christmas. Retailers are trying to make up for a lack of sales this past weekend.



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Drug makers work on 1-pill AIDS treatment

By LINDA A. JOHNSON

TRENTON, N.J. — In an effort to make medication regimens easier for HIV-positive patients, two drug companies have announced plans to collaborate on the first all-in-one, one-a-day pill to treat the infeation.

the infection.

Currently, the best AIDS treatment requires patients to take two to four pills a day. Less than a decade ago, many patients had to take 25 to 30 pills a day, often at precise times and under specific conditions such as with food, making it extremely difficult for paschedule. Missing doses makes it easier for the virus to mutate and become resistant to medication.

become resistant of neutration.

In the first collaboration by competing AIDS drug makers, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. and Gilead Sciences Inc. announced Monday that they have formed a joint venture to test and market a single pill combining three widely used medicines.

Because the three individual drugs already are on the market, the once-a-day combination could be approved and on sale as early as the second half of 2006, said David Rosen, a spokesman for Bristol-Myers Squibb.

"To have it all in a single pill is terrific," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseas-

The combination pill will be made up of Sustiva, made by Bristol-Myers Squibb, and two AIDS drugs made by Gilead Sciences:

Viread and Entitiva

The latter two drugs are members of the same class of AIDS drugs, but they block copying of the AIDS virus at two different points early in its replication cycle. Sustiva is from a different class of drugs and attacks the virus later in the cycle.

The pill is for people diagnosed HIV-positive who have never taken HIV medicines before.

The two companies will have to find a way to combine the component drugs so that the single pill is absorbed the same way, has identical effects, lasts in the body as long and has the same shelf alle, said Robert Lipper, vice president of biopharmaceutics research and development at Brissearch and development at Bris-

tol-Myers.

The three drugs, which are already becoming the treatment of choice, together cost \$900 to \$1,000 a month. Rosen said it is too soon to say how much the sin-

gle pill will cost.

The combination does not include a protease inhibitor, a class of drug that has been standard in recent years but that also carries many side effects.

Associated Press writer Marilynn Marchione in Milwaukee contributed to

NIH stops Aleve drug study

Risks included heart attacks, strokes

BY PAUL RECER

WASHINGTON — An Alzheimer's disease prevention trial was suspended after researchers said there were more heart attacks and strokes among partients taking naproxen, an over-the-counter pain reliever in use for 28 years and commonly known under the brand name

Aleve.

The study, involving some 2,500 patients, was to test whether anaproxen or Celebrex, both pain relievers, could reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease among healthy elderly patients who were at an increased risk of the disease.

Officials at the National Institutes of Health said the study was suspended after three years when it was found that patients taking naproxen had a 50 percent greater incidence of cardiovascular events — heart attack or stroke — than patients taking placebo.

Another factor, officials said, was the announcement last week that advertising for Celebrex was being halted after a study found that high doses of the drug were associated with an in-

crease in heart attack risk. Preliminary data from the Alzheimer's study, however, did not indicate an increased risk for heart attack or stroke for Celebrey officials said

Lester Crawford, acting commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, acknowledged Tuesday that the conflicting studies are confusing and call for continued evaluation. For now, he recommended following the dosage recommendations for the

"Any drug taken long enough and at high enough dosage can cause some difficulty," Crawford said on NBC's "Today."

"It would be premature to say what we we're going to do with either one of these drugs, Celebrex or Aleve," he said. "However, we will keep all regulator options open and make some determinations as quickly as possible based on the data."

Celebrex, a prescription drug, and naproxen are both commonly used to treat the joint pain of arthritis. Naproxen has been approved for sale, first as a prescription and then as an over-the-counter drug, sites 1976. Celebrex is in the same

class — COX2 enzyme inhibitors — as Vioxx, an arthritis drug recently taken off the market by its manufacturer after it was linked to an increase in heart attack

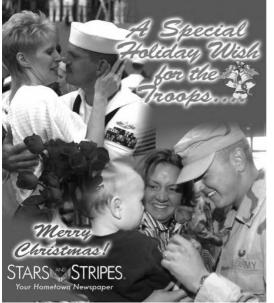
Officials acknowledged that the implications for the continued use of naproxen are not clear and will require further

Dr. Sandra Kweder of the FDA said the NIH study is the first to show that naproxen might increase the risk of hear attack or stroke and that the findings are "confusing." No immediate action, however, is expected toward naproxen, she said.

"We are not contemplating any specific regulatory action over the next few days," Kweder said. "We will be working with the NIH to try to understand the data better and determine what will be appropriate from there."

Patients who routinely take naproxen should follow the drug package instructions carefully, Kweder said, including the directions to not take it for more than 10 days, and to consult a doctor if pain persists.

Efforts to obtain reaction Monday night produced no answers at phone numbers for Bayer Healthcare, the maker of Aleve.



Marion Bergan inserts a needle in the face of Paula Scardamalia during a Dec. 10 facial acupuncture treatment in Albany, N.Y.



Youth-seekers turning to facial acupuncture

BY MICHAEL HILL The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — Paula Scardamalia has pins in her face — nine tiny ones angling out near her eyes, mouth and jaw.

The pins were poked in to tighten chin skin and erase lines on the S2-year-old woman's face. The practice, called facial acupuncture, is becoming popular as a sort of holistic alternative to trying to turn back time through toxins or surgery.

"This has got to be healthier than Botox or a surgical facelift," said Scardamalia, the little needles wagging slightly.

Interest in facial acupuncture might be connected to the rising popularity of alternative medicine, or to society's obsession with youth and beauty, or to the mass of aging baby boomers. Whatever the reason, acupuncturists report a wave of interest in the ancient Chinese practice.

Acupuncturists typically stimu-

late selected points on the body with hair-thin pins to promose good health and alleviate pain. They view it as correcting energy imbalances along the body's "meridians," which carry an energy flow called qi (pronounced "chee")—a concept many main-stream physicians say lacks scientific evidence.

In facial acupuncture, needles are usually stuck in wrinkles and sags to bring more blood, qi and muscle tone to an area. The theoryis that a healthy face is a better-looking face.

Marion Bergan, the licensed acupuncturist who treated Scardamalia for a demonstration, offers "facial rejuvenation acupuncture" in addition to her medical acupunc-

Most of Bergan's facial customers are women in their 50s and 60s. But Wakefield said her practice gets a fair share of men. too.

"They realize in order to keep their jobs and to get jobs, they need to look younger," Wakefield said.

Suspect's husband offers sympathy Doctors: Tiniest

Kan. man says he believed accused wife who claimed baby was theirs

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. - When Kevin Montgomery was presented with a newborn child he said he believed his wife's story - that the girl was theirs. He had no idea, he said, that an eight-months-pregnant woman had just been strangled in her home, her baby cut

from her womb. The couple named the baby girl Abigail, and did the first thing any proud parents would: drove her home so they could show her off.

But the next day, Lisa Montgomery, 36, was charged with kidnapping resulting in death for allegedly strangling Bobbie Jo Stinnett and taking the baby.

Lisa Montgomery appeared Monday before a packed courtroom in Kansas City, Kan., where her attorney refused to waive her right to preliminary and identity hearings. Both hearings have been scheduled for Thursday morning.

"I had no idea." Kevin Montgom erv said outside the courthouse. He said he knew nothing about the grisly allegations against his wife, and he has not been charged with any wrongdoing

A funeral for Stinnett, 23, was planned for Tuesday.

The baby, named Victoria Jo

by her father, Zeb Stinnett, spent the weekend in a Topeka hospital before being released Monday.

"When we received her, she was in pretty good shape," said hospital spokeswoman Carol Wheeler.According to authorities, Kevin Montgomery picked up his wife and the infant in Topeka last week, and drove about 40 miles south to Melvern, Kan., where the couple lived — showing off the child. Authorities said Lisa Montgomery had told family and friends that she was preg-



STARS AND STRIPES .

TOPEKA (KAN.) CAPITAL-JOU

Kevin Montgomery, center, speaks to reporters Monday outside the Robert J. Dole Federal Courthouse in Kansas City, Kan., after the first court appearance of his wife, Lisa Montgomery, who is charged with kidnapping resulting in the death of Bobbie Jo Stinnett.

Authorities have said Lisa Montgomery gained access to Stinnett's Skidmore, Mo., home by expressing interest in Stinnett's dogs - rat terriers which

Stinnett and Lisa Montgomery were photographed together at a dog show months before last week's attack, a woman who attended the show said.

Wicklund

cleans up the

remains of a

spruce tree

blown down

Monday in

Longmont,

Wicklund, a

city forester,

said the tree

was about 50

vears old.

LONGMONT (COLO.) DAILY

Colo

by high winds

that was

surviving baby OK

By JOHN BIEMER Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO - When Rumaisa Rahman was born, she weighed just 8.6 ounces and was no bigger than a cell phone

Three months later, doctors say she's doing "extremely well," and will be introduced Tuesday by Loyola University Medical Cen-ter in Maywood, Ill, as the world's tiniest surviving baby. Rumaisa was born 1.3 ounces lighter than the previous record holder in 1989

Rumaisa, whose name means "white as milk" in India, was born at the hospital on Sept. 19 along with her fraternal twin sister. Hiba, who weighed 1 pound 4 ounces. Hiba's name means "gift

from God." Their mother, Mahajabeen Shaik, 23, of Hanover Park, gave birth by Caesarian section after 25 weeks and six days of gestation (a typical, full-term pregnan-cy is about 40 weeks). Shaik en-tered a hospital early because she had developed severe pre-eclampsia, high blood pressure, which was affecting her health as well as Rumaisa's activity in the womb

Shaik and her husband, Mohammed Abdul Rahman, 32, both originally from Hyderabad, India, could not hold their daughters until their second month because the babies were hooked to IVs and were inside incubators. The habies were conceived naturally, hospital officials said, and are the first children for the couple, who were married in India in

Studies suggest that Rumaisa, who now weighs about 2 pounds and 10 ounces, will develop normally, according to Dr. Jonathan Muraskas, professor of pediatrics and neonatal-perinatal medicine at Loyola University Chicago's Stritch School of Medicine. Ultrasounds have shown that Ru-maisa's head is normal and there is no bleeding in her brain, a common complication that can put a baby at risk for cerebral palsy

The previous record holder for world's smallest baby, Madeline Mann, goes to high school in Hoffman Estates, Ill., and celebrated her 15th birthday in June. She also was born at Loyola after her mother developed pre-eclampsia.

Near 100 mph winds create havoc in Colorado

BY ERIN GARTNER The Associated Press

DENVER - Wind gusting to nearly 100 mph swept across Colorado on Monday, forcing skiers off the slopes, closing highways and neeling the roof off a high school gym while a basketball team practiced inside.

No serious injuries were reported, but the gusty weather dominated everything from driving to walking for much of northern and Gusts reached 90 mph in Breck-

enridge and forced the ski resort to shut down a chair lift. "We generally get pretty high

winds before a storm moves in, resort spokeswoman Emily Jacob said. "We really pay close attention to that. It's a safety concern for us. The National Weather Service

issued a high-wind warning along the heavily populated Front Range after 95 mph winds were reported in Superior. Gusts reached 98 mph at Carter Lake near Berthoud and ranged from 79 mph to 85 mph in Louisville. Boulder and Golden



At Monarch High School in Louisville, several students escaped injury when a portion of the gym roof was torn off. The school was closed for winter vacation. though basketball players practicing inside had to be evacuated.

The wind overturned a small plane at a Denver-area airport and knocked an empty tractor-trailer on its side in Littleton, State Patrol Trooper Don Moseman said. The driver was treated for minor injuries.

Trees were blown down elsewhere in Louisville and a roof under construction at a new recreation center was peeled off, police

Authorities closed Colorado Highway 93 near the former Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant northwest of Denver for about an hour after winds knocked down a power line

The winds eased as a cold front began to arrive.

Holocaust survivors, U.S. settle claims GIs stole Jews' property

BY CATHERINE WILSON The Associated Press

MIAMI - The U.S. government has agreed to settle with Holocaust survivors who claim that American Army officers during World War II plundered a trainload of family treasures that had been seized by the Nazis. The families and the Justice De partment told a judge Monday that they have agreed in principle to a financial award over the "Gold Train." but the exact terms have not been worked out

The lawsuit sought up to \$10,000 each

for as many as 30,000 Hungarian Jews and their survivors

U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz told attorneys to deliver a package detailing a worldwide settlement by Feb. 18.

"This agreement is a step closer to the goal we all share, a measure of justice for these Holocaust victims and their families," said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.

In 1945, in the waning days of the war, the Nazis sent 24 train cars toward Germany carrying gold, silver, paintings, Oriental rugs, furs and other household goods seized from Hungarian Jews.

Nazis, Hungarians and Austrians stole from the train along the way.

The train was then intercepted by U.S. forces, and American officers helped themselves to china, silverware and artwork for their homes and offices according to an advisory commission appointed by then-Pres-

The train and cargo worth an estimated \$50 million to \$120 million were shrouded in official secrecy until a presidential commission on Holocaust assets detailed it in

"No way the money we would get would help with our losses. We were not even thinking about it. We just want to have closure on this," said Alex Moskovic of Hobe Sound, one of three Hungarian Jews who

attended Monday's hearing.

However, New York University professor Ronald Zweig, who wrote a book on the train and served as the government's expert, said that the Gold Train has taken on mythic proportions and that the Army made "a very serious effort" to protect the

Jenna Hamilton stands in the parking lot of the Carousel Mall in Syracuse, N.Y., on Dec. 15. Hamilton considers herself to be in the "search and destroy" classification when it comes to finding a parking spot. She roams the aisles. cruising endlessly until the perfect spot



Parking lots harbor 4 'species' of stressed-out holiday drivers

BY WILLIAM KATES The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - John Hrynyk emerged from his car at the Carousel Center mall after nabbing a parking space 100 feet from an entrance

parking space 100 feet from an entrance.

The 55-year-old scrap yard owner admits he's the type to slowly prowl the mall parking lot until he finds a spot close to the building. "I always look for the closest spot to the door, and 90 percent of the time I find one," he said

In other words, he's a classic "search and destroy-

Connecticut-based Response Insurance surveyed its drivers and identified what it says are the four main species of mall parkers: "search and destroyers," "lay and wait," "stalkers" and "see it and take it

But in the asphalt jungle, it turns out, it's the least

aggressive who are getting the last laugh. Search and destroyers roam the aisles, cruising endlessly for the perfect spot. Lay and wait parkers position themselves at the end of an aisle and wait for a space to open up in what they start to believe is their space to open up in what they start to believe is their territory. Stalkers, the most predatory, slowly follow shoppers leaving the store back to their parking spot. The three methods increase the risk of situations

that can lead to stress or conflict. Hrvnvk was lucky

he didn't run into another search and destroyer waiting for the same spot, said Ray Palermo, a spokesman for Response Insurance.

"It's not like road rage, but it can cause a lot of

stress nevertheless," he said. The favored method is to see it and take it, where shoppers don't care how far they have to walk. The company said it's less stressful and helps drivers

save the most time.

Even the AAA likes this option. On its list of tips for surviving holiday driving, the automobile association advises people to "play the outfield. Outlying areas have more spaces, lighter traffic and a lower

risk of collision. The advice comes at a time when parking lots may be crammed with last-minute shoppers. The National Retail Federation estimated that up to 20 ercent of holiday sales would occur the week be-

fore Christmas Jena Hamilton, 24, gets irritated by the lay and

waiters and the stalkers. "You want to get your car warmed up, everything adjusted. Then you see this car in the rearview mirror with its blinker on, and a line of cars waiting behind them,' ," Hamilton said. "It can be nerve-rack-f holiday shopping weren't stressful enough.

Report: Attack on LNG tankers would be deadly

By H. Josef Hebert The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - A terror attack on a tanker delivering liquefied natural gas at a U.S. port could set off a fire so hot it would burn skin and damage buildings nearly a mile away, government scientists say in a report expected to influence where new multibil. lion-dollar terminals will be built.

The report from a government nuclear weapons lab, a 160-page unclassified version of which was obtained Monday by The Associated Press, characterizes an LNG tanker spill from a terror attack as a low probability. If successful, however, it would become "a high consequence event" that could produce massive injuries and property damage, the report said.

The yearlong study by scientists at Sandia National Laboratorv, a premier federal research facility, provides the most detailed analysis to date of the potential public safety impact of a terrorist attack on an LNG transport tank-

While the report does not recommend prohibiting tankers from carrying LNG through heavily populated areas, it says those shipments should occur only after "the most rigorous deter-rent measures" are in place to reduce the probability of an attack.

The tankers, each of which carries up to 30 million gallons of LNG, arrive every few days at four U.S. terminals: Everett, Mass.; Cove Point, Md.; Elba Island, Ga., and Lake Charles, La. All are expanding as regulators weigh the merits of putting more than three dozen more such facilities at U.S. ports, many in urban

In its minus-260 degrees liquid state, LNG cannot explode and is not flammable. If a missile or explosive should tear a hole in a tanker or a storage tank, howev-er, the escaping liquid would be transformed instantaneously into a gas and probably would ignite in a massive fire.

The Sandia report said terrorists, using readily available weapons and technology, could blast a 10-foot hole into the side of an LNG tanker.

The assessment evaluates a range of scenarios that would result in release of millions of gal-lons of LNG from a transport tank-

The scenarios include a takeover of a vessel by an insider or hi-jacker, external attacks using explosive-laden boats, triggered explosions or rocket-propelled grenades or missiles.

Detailed discussions of specific threats were included only in the classified version of the report. but the unclassified version examined the general impact such an attack and LNG fire on water would have to people within a

mile of the spill. "What we've learned is that we can significantly reduce the likelihood of a terrorist attack occurring with security planning and mitigation," said Mark Maddox, a deputy assistant secretary at the Energy Department, which commissioned the study

Even with many details left out of the unclassified version, the report describes a harrowing potential for disaster if a terror attack were to succeed in releasing millions of gallons of LNG from a double-hulled vessel that typically carries more than 30 million allons of the frosty liquid fuel.

The Sandia scientists identified 'several credible" terror scenarios that the report said would result in at least one — possibly as many as three — of a tanker's five cargo tanks being breached. That would ignite a pool of fire to spread several hundred vards in all directions, the report said

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An LNG tanker leaves Boston Harbor in January after off-loading its cargo. Terrorists have the ability to blast a 10-foot hole into the side of an LNG tanker that could unleash a massive spill and fire so hot it would burn skin and damage buildings nearly a mile away, government scientists say in a new report.

STARS STRIPES | LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/OPINION

THOMAS BIERMANN, General Manager, Europe LT. COL. CYRIL I. SOCHA Commander

News and Editorial

News afto Editorial Director DOUG CLAWSON, Managing Editor ROBB GRINDSTAFF, Associate Editor ROBB GRINDSTAFF, Associate Editor SAM AMRREIN, Europe Bureau Chief SCOTT BURGESS, Middle East Bureau Chief JOE GROMELSKI, Electronic Edition Editor ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITORS:

Peter Photikoe Photo/Granhics

Addresses

U.S. MAIL: Unit 29480, APO AE 09211 INTERNATIONAL MAIL: Postfach 1330, 64345 Griesheim.

FAX: DSN 349-8416; civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601416 E-MAIL: News: pews@mail.orb

E-MMLR. News. news@mail estripses.osd.mil Lettlers: lettlers/@mail estripses.osd.mil CENTRAL 0FFICE: 529 14th Sheet NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301. Phone DSN 312-782-0900 or civ. (+1) (202) 761-0900. Fax (+1) (202) 761-0890 EUTORAL DIEECTOR: David Mazzella, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 330, Washington, DC 20045-1301. Phone DSN 312-763-0945 or civ. (+1) (202) 761-0845.

ızzarellad@stripes.osd.mil

OMBUDSMAN: Joe Ungaro. Send comments to: Ombudsman, S and Stripes, \$29 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, 20045-1301. Phone civilian (+1) (401) 364-6032; (+1) (401) 364-8696;

-mail: nmhudeman⊘stnines osd mil

How to call us

Editor: DSN 349-8237: civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601237 Letters: DSN 349-8400: civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601200 Sports: DSN 349-8225: civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601225 Circulation: DSN 349-8237; civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601437 Advantision: DSN 349-8237; civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601437 Advertising: DSN 349-8335/443; civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601335/443

News Bureaus

GERMANY (Country code +49)

Bamberg: Rick Emert, 279th BSB, Unit 27535, Bαx 23541, APO 09139-7535, tel. DSN 469-7957 or civ. (0) 951/36896; fax D 469-8007 or civ. (0) 951/30690-8007; e-mail: emertr@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Baumholder: Terry Boyd, 222nd BSB, APO AE 09034; tel. DSN 485-6089, or civ. (0) 6783-900776; e-mail:

mail.estripes.osd.mil

boydt@mail.estripes.osd.mil Darmstadt: Kevin Dougherty, Unit 29480, APO AE 09211; tel. DSN 349-8406 or civ. (0) 6155-601406: 349-3406 or cir. (f) 6155-60106; - mails dougherin/comal estispers and mil. Ward Sanderson, Unit 2480, APO & 19211; tel. 1939 349-325 or cir. (v) 6155-60125; e. mula sanderson paralle estinges actional or cir. (v) 615-601290; --mail. iriga(g):mail. estispers actional individuology/Mannieris (von R. Anderson, Room 117, Romerstr. 104, 89113 Heidelberg, tel. 1938 370-7010 or cir. (v) 6221/600554; arc or. (v) 6221/2421; --email.

andersoni@mail.estripes.osd.ml;

Kaiserslautern/Spangdahlem: APO AE 09227-3717; tel. DSN 489-6585 or civ. (0) 631/52104 or (0) 631/57140; fax civ. (0)

iontzs@mail.estripes.osd.mil: chudvi@mail.estripes.osd.mi SPAIN

Rota: Scott Schonauer, PSC 819, Box 1, FPO AE 09645; tel. 727-1099 or civ. (+34) (956) 82-1099; fax DSN 727-10: civ. (+34) (956) 82-1034 civ. (+34) ______ e-mail: schonauers@mail.esuspec____ UNITED KINGDOM

RAF Mildenhall: Ron Jensen, Building 465 ECSS-UK, RAF Milde APO AE 09459; tel. DSN 238-4868 or civ. (+4 1638/544868; fax civ. (+44) (0) 1638/718013; 1638/544868; fax civ. (nail.estripes.osd.mil WASHINGTON D.C.

#WS-Influority Duck

Bureau editor: Patrick Dickson, 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301; tal. (+1) (202) 761-0859;

e-mail: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil

Lisa Burgess, tel div. (+1) (703) 692-1875; and Leo Shane, 529

ab bulgess, let v. (+1) (v.052-167), and bed simely de-14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301; tel civ (+1) (202) 761-1183; fax civ. (+1) (202) 761-0890; e-mail burgessl@stripes.osd.mil and shanel@stripes.osd.mil

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Remembering a WWII vet

I've appreciated reading the coverage of the 60th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. My uncle, Pvt. Irving (Buddy)

Clements, died in that battle 60 years ago. According to records we have read, the Germans had captured several soldiers. My uncle was on a hill nearby and saw what had happened. He began to fire at the Germans who were guarding the men, giving some of them time to escape. He

was killed by the enemy returning fire My dad and all three of his brothers were in Europe fighting at that time. My grandmother had said that she woke up one night out of a sound sleep to see a vision of a soldier. She knew then that one of her sons had been killed. She was notified shortly after of Uncle Buddy's death. He was buried at the cemetery in Luxem-

bourg. I have a lot of respect for the men who fought for our freedom in World War II. I want to thank them for their sacrifice I know that my dad was forever changed by the time he spent here in Germany

I'm glad to be able to support my husband as he does his part in the war we fight today. I pray that we can stand firm and finish what the enemy has started, just like our fathers before us.

Martie Carter Heidelberg, Germany

Hunting preserves balance

This is in response to "Hunting photo unnecessary" (letter, Dec. 11).

The writer expresses that "yahoos are out there attempting to prove their manhood (or lack of it)"; however, this is not the case with the vast majority of hunters. The majority of hunters do not condone killing wildlife solely for trophy purposes. However, there is a small minority that does, and this is deplorable

There is an American stereotype of "Redneck Bob" dressed in camouflage exterminating all deer in America. Not so! Most hunters are skilled, intelligent individuals who are matching wits against animals with

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superior senses of smell, eyesight and hearing.

American founders imported 40,000 white-tailed deer to America and, to date, there are about 5 million in Texas. The deer population rises while hunters' numbers are declining, which is offsetting the balance, especially without many wild predatory animals in the United States.

Hunting is wildlife management. Wildlife must be harvested to reduce the disease in animal populations and to reduce crops and habitat damage from overpopulation.

Hunting licenses are regulated and harvested animal numbers are managed by game officials. Harvesting animals for management and food purposes is not cowardly, it is right. Many states allow hunters to do nate deer to food programs as a humanitarian gesture.

The act of killing is barbaric in nature, so I concur with the writer on this point. To truly see the "necessary" barbaric nature of killing animals for food. I recommend that Stars and Stripes run an article on animal slaughterhouse operations.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steven Schantz Camp Liberty, Iraq

What 'holiday' is it?

I went to a "holiday party." I have been wished a "happy holiday" over and over. The Scout leader asked us to bring a dozen "holiday cookies" to the Scout meeting. "Holiday" this and "holiday" that, I feel like yelling at the top of my lungs, "What holiday is it?"

It is, of course, the Christmas holiday. It's the Christmas holiday not only because the pope and religious prelates around the world said so, but also because the U.S. Congress and President Grant said so.

It is a federally recognized holiday called Christmas. In that respect, it's no different from the 4th of July. Memorial Day, etc.

Today, 87 percent of Americans be-lieve in Christmas. Of the remaining 13 percent, the vast majority, if wished a Merry Christmas, likely will say, "Thank you" and go on with their lives. That leaves a tiny minority that is trying to bring an end to Christmas as we know it in the United States.

Social positions are like combat positions in that more are simply abandoned to the enemy than overrun. Because the American Civil Liberties Union and a tiny percentage of hypersensitive people threaten every tradition of Christmas, you are more likely to be sued for wishing a co-worker or classmate a Merry Christmas than running a Ponzi scheme at the old-folks' home. So, to avoid the hassle, many just give in, like getting whining children what they want. But most parents know that the more you give in, the more they will whine. Sooner or later the crybabies have to be told that enough is enough.

So, Merry, Merry Christmas, everybody. To the vast majority, take the greeting as it is intended, a message of hope, peace and joy, for a savior has been born. To the lunatic fringe, think of it as nothing more than glad tidings for the federal holiday that is, after all, Christmas.

Doug Schumick Stuttgart, Germany

'Star Wars' fails another screen test

Los Angeles Times t should surprise no one that the first

test in two years of the "Star Wars" missile defense system fizzled last Wednesday when a "kill vehicle" never left its silo in the Marshall Islands. The startling thing would have been if the \$85 million test had succeeded.

Ever since President Reagan called for this ill-conceived system in 1983, his conservative acolytes have been determined to make it a reality despite widespread evidence of its impracticality. Two decades later it has gone nowhere desnite President Bush's rash promise that he would have a limited system in place by 2005.

The government has spent about \$130 billion on the program and is slated to invest \$50 billion more over the next five years. Yet the only tests that have succeeded were rigged; the missiles being intercepted were equipped with homing devices. The most recent test before Wednes-day's, on Dec. 11, 2002, failed when a warhead didn't detach from its booster rocket.

Richard Lehner, a spokesman for the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency, said the [latest] test didn't represent a failure of the system, just a glitch. This is like a repairman telling you there's nothing wrong with your car just because it won't start, that it simply has a mechanical problem.

The Bush administration, though, isn't budging. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who headed a commission in 1998 warning about missile threats from North Korea and Iran, says a defense is vital, It isn't. As Greg Thielmann, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research during Bush's first term, wrote in Arms Control Today, Rumsfeld contorted the evidence in 1998 to create a ... missile threat where none existed. .

It's unfathomable how President Bush can continue to talk about spending cuts while embracing such an unsuccessful and costly military research program.

Doonesbury BY GARRY TRUDEAU









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OPINION

'Buying American' will lower trade deficit

WASHINGTON

hould Americans buy American? In the holiday shopping season and throughout the year, consumers should take the responsibility to be informed and aware of basic facts about what they are buying - how and where the goods they buy are produced.

Furthermore, they should give some thought to the impact of their purchases on the U.S. and global economy, on decent jobs and on the environment

That isn't to say, however, that consumers can bear the entire burden of social responsibility: governments must set and enforce ap propriate rules to protect workers, public health and the environment; and corporations have a responsibility to obey the laws and be socially and environmentally respon-

But consumers can and do make a difference, and they should welcome the power they hold at the cash register. Deliberate and thoughtful consumer purchases can help strengthen the bargaining power of workers fighting for decent and humane working conditions, and send a powerful message to corporate headquarters about the standards consumers expect for the goods and services they buy.

When consumers choose American-made products, they are supporting good jobs in their communities, as well as an expanded tax base that can fund schools, roads, research and social programs.

Manufacturing jobs have traditionally been the backbone of the American middle class, providing decent wages and benefits, but also a ripple effect in job creation throughout the economy. Each manufacturing job, it turns out, is associated with two to three times as many secondary jobs as those in services or retail

Faster productivity growth in the manufacturing sector, relative to the rest of the economy, is the foundation for noninflationary wage growth over time

In addition, buying American is one way consumers can help stem our national borrowing binge. This year, our trade deficit — the annual excess of imports over exports will be well over half a trillion dollars, or

more than \$1 million a minute. The October trade deficit hit an all-time high of \$55.5 billion.

We fund these expenditures by borrowing from abroad, and our national debt is now close to \$3 trillion.

These enormous and unsustainable deficits eventually will cause the dollar to fall relative to other currencies, which will make American products more competitive, but also likely will lead to higher inflation and higher interest rates. By choosing American-made products, especially big-ticket items such as cars or appliances, American consumers can help reduce our need to borrow from abroad.

In addition to seeking out American-made items consumers should look for products and services made by union workers. The union label denotes high-quality products and services made by skilled workers who are treated fairly and decently by their emplovers

Union workers earn more money, have better benefits, are more productive and have greater job security than nonunion workers. The pay differential is 27 percent for all workers, and this difference is even greater for women, African-Americans and Latinos.



It isn't always possible to buy American-made goods, even with the best of intentions. When buying goods made in other countries, consumers should also try to stay informed about working conditions, labor laws and corporate practices

Information about workers' rights in different countries is available through several sources: The U.S. State Department publishes annual reports on human rights conditions around the world, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the International Labor Organization provide detailed information on labor rights.

Watchdog groups - including the Worker

Rights Consortium, Students Against Sweatshops, the Campaign for Labor Rights, the National Labor Committee and the International Labor Rights Fund, among others monitor corporate practices and expose egregious violations.

At the end of the day, governments, corpo rations and consumers all have a role to play in improving working conditions here and around the world, and in making responsi-

ble economic decisions.

When you go to the mall with your credit card, get into the true holiday spirit, and make your dollars count toward a fairer and more humane world.

Thea Lee is assistant director for international mics at the AFI -CIO labor union

U.S. consumers shouldn't consider products' origin

BY MARK J. PERRY

FLINT Mich merican consumers should practice nondiscriminatory shopping this Christmas without any regard to the national origin of the products they buy.

Those consumers who do intentionally alter their holiday shopping habits to "buy American" most likely will end up worse off and will become confused in the process.

Attempts by shoppers to shun "foreign" products during the holiday season to bring down the U.S. trade deficit won't work. And even if changes in holiday shopping were successful at lowering our trade deficit, it does not necessarily follow that our economy would be better off. Here's why

First, in our increasingly global economy, the distinction between "foreign" and "American" goods is becoming increasingly difficult and meaningless.

With global trade at an all-time high, all "foreign" products most likely have some U.S. components, and products "made in America" typically contain foreign inputs. The automobile market clearly illustrates this point

Are the Toyota, Mazda and Mitsubishi vehicles built in the United States by UAW workers for foreign-based automakers with both domestic and foreign parts "American" or "foreign" cars? Now that Michigan-based Ford owns Jaguar and Volvo, are those foreign-produced vehicles containing U.S.-built components really "foreign" vehicles? And does it really matter? No. In the search to find only "American" products, holiday shoppers will end up confused, and will unnecessarily limit their shopping op-

They could also end up with a higher shop-

gain-priced imports. Second, our trade deficit is ultimately

caused by the fact that national spending by American consumers, businesses and gov ernment exceeds our national income. Holiday shoppers who substitute "American" products for "foreign" gifts, without altering their overall level of consumption, will not affect our trade deficit by even \$1

Only if we consume less and save more would our trade deficit be affected. The only effective way for holiday shoppers to cut the budget deficit would be to reduce spending which would lead to weak December retail sales and would stall the economic recovery.

Instead of altering holiday shopping habits, consumers concerned about the trade deficit should write to members of Congress and encourage politicians to stop the growth

reasons for our large trade deficit.

Unfortunately, those who advocate a "Buy American" strategy to promote prosperity are recycling the discredited mercantilist theory of the 1800s, which claims that: a) exports and trade surpluses are good, and b) imports and trade deficits are bad. In reality, neither of those positions is correct, and in fact, both imports and trade deficits can actually be very beneficial.

To understand this, think about how you benefit from your personal trade deficit with your local grocer

If you import \$500 of groceries every month from your local grocery store, and your grocer buys nothing from you, you would have a monthly \$500 trade deficit with your local supermarket. Could you possibly make your family better off by buying

duce your trade deficit with your grocer? If not, then altering your holiday shopping to reduce our country's trade deficit won't make you better off either.

Holiday shoppers should be thankful that they can shop in a global marketplace more conveniently, and at a lower cost this holiday season than at any other time in history.

Consumers should spend wisely on gifts to get the lowest price and the best value, but should pay no attention to labels of national

Whether you're buying Mongolian cashmere toys from China or a Turkish bathrobe, or taking a sunny Mexican holiday vacation, enjoy guilt-free Christmas shopping and traveling in a global economy, and don't worry about the trade deficit.

Mark J. Perry is an economist at the University of Michigan-Flint.

Mallard Fillmore



Find that one great gift idea

Perfect present bears repeating

BY BELLE ELVING AND LIZ SEYMOUR The Washington Post

We once heard of a woman who gave almost everyone on her Christmas list a pair of cashmere socks: little booties for a friend's baby, pinkstriped knee-highs for a girly-girl niece, impeccable argyles for a button-down brother, better-than-another-shawl granny

Her strategy may have lacked variety, but you've got to applaud its universality. The most time-consuming part of holiday shopping is figuring out what to give and where to get it. But settle something like cashmere socks — what's not to like? — and you're halfway home

So that's what we've looked to include in this annual gift guide. A one-great-idea-fits-all solution to last-minute shopping. Gifts that mix practicality almost anyone would appreciate with charm no one could resist.

Have fun with this strategy Giving one rubber spatula would be weird, but a bright bouquet of them in all shapes and sizes is wonderful. Our suggestions can be found in lots of stores, in many styles and at a range of prices. So even if you haven't started shopping, here's a way to get your list all wrapped up.

We couldn't resist suggesting a

254.11 6,171.85 1,118.28 Dow Jones Utilities NYSE Composite Amex Index

1,750.82 1,060.72 548.29 Nasdaq Composite S&P 500 S&P MidCap

515.90 10.268.52 Russell 2001 DI Wilshire

NYSE

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

Dow Jones Industrials Dow Jones Transportation

SPDR SemiHTr iShTaiwan DJIA Diam iShRs2000 ISh HK iShJapan WheatR g

YTD Chg %Chg

+26.3

+6.7 +18.3 +19.8

+6.6 +46.8 +14.9 +18.3 +28.6 +36.5 +18.0 -20.4 +28.2

+.12 -.01 +.32 +.58 +.36

-1.46 +.05 -.19 -.08 +.36 +.17 +1.26

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

... 17 ... 30 1.00 15 ... 19 .07 22 1.44 18 .88 24 66.60 46.28 53.22 56.19 58.75 106.93 37.11

.40 1.00 .92 .80 75.40 59.08 56.56 38.63 48.60 57.81 23.40 73.14

Boeing Computer Sciences Engineered Sup Sy:

General Dynamic General Electric

DIV PE Last

39.27 61.61 35.63 +.03 +51.0 +62.3 +6.6



A one-great-idea-fits-all solution to last-minute shopping: Clockwise from top, a rearview desk mirror, cord organizer and door stop.

few small gifts that may seem more functional than festive But for the hard-core home-obsessed these items could be one of the best surprises under the tree

1. Colors, coordinated: Help her on the compulsive quest for the perfect shade of sage by buying her a complete paint fan deck of all the colors from her favorite company. Many paint stores and hardware stores will sell them. for about \$15 to \$20.

2. Perfect measurements: Anvone wanting to hang a picture, put up a towel rack or figure out if the couch will fit would appreciate a quality tape measure. A perfect gift for the new homeowner or first-time apartment dweller.

3. Put a stop to it: A door that sneakily swings shut as soon as vou open it is one household an-

> +24.84 +10.51 +26.54 +12.68

> > 39.20 26.95 1.18 24.04 19.05 13.58 22.70 -23 -23 -133 +36 -46 -65

Chg.

-.01 -.12 -.03

+.24 -.06 -.01 -.01 -.01 +.49 +.12 -.13 +.01

+8.6 +9.1 +9.4 +10.8 +4.5 +4.2 +10.2 +5.4 +10.7 +5.9 +6.4 NE +13.7 +9.6 +3.3 +5.1

+8.80 +9.31 +13.68 +6.21 +7.44

-.34 +.04 -.45

-.63 +14.57 +16.14

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 or

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

28.95 42.22 19.12 16.05 33.49 22.48 11.14

21.54 8.26 12.79 12.65 28.12 43.66 17.23 15.49 12.98

Monday's Market Summary

333.21 7,116.98 1,414.57

638.05

32.21 11.68 +.03 -.25

Fidelity Invest: GroIn Fidelity Invest: GroCo

Fidelity Invest: Groco Amer Century Inv: Ultra Fidelity Spartan: Epidx Putnam Funds A: GrinA p Fidelity Invest: A Mig-Frank/ Temp Frink A: SMCpGrA AIM Investments A: Corest p Fidelity Invest: USBI Fidelity Invest: USBI Fidelity Advisor T: GrOpT Fidelity Advisor T: EqinT Smidter Audios S: Groines

Scudder Funds S: Groing Putnam Funds A: GlbEqt

Merrill Lynch I: BalCapl x Scudder Funds S: Intl FdS Fidelity Advisor T: Ovrsea Lord Abbett A: DevGtA o

udder Funds S: Income errill Lynch I: USGvtMt

AMEX

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

noyance that's easy to fix: The charming rubber pup pictured above, spotted at the Container Store for \$3.99, keeps any door in

4. Looking backward: A desk that faces away from the door is supposedly bad feng shui.

Put things right in a home office with this rearview mirror that affixes to a computer monitor so you can see what's going on behind your back. Sold at the Container Store for \$9.99

5. Major cords: A snarl of wires nder the desk or behind the TV? Help a neatnik get things straight with a cheerful little cable turtle that won a spot in the Museum of Modern Art's design collection. Widely available at home and office supply stores; this one pic-tured above is \$6.99 at the Container Store.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates
Euro costs\$1.3745
EUro costs
Dollar costs€0.7275
British pound\$1.99 Japanese ven (Dec. 22)102.00
Japanese yen (Dec. 22)102.00
South Korean won (Dec. 21)1,031.00
Commercial rates
Bahrain (Dinar)0.37699
British pound\$1.9467
Canada (Dollar)1.2289
Denmark (Krone)5.24
Egypt (Pound)6.2224
Euro\$1.339/0.7463
Hong Kong (Dollar)7.7806
Hungary (Forint)182.95
Iceland (Krona)62.665
Israel (Shekel)4.3365
Japan (Yen)104.04
Kuwait (Dinar)0.29467
Norway (Krone) 5.80 Philippines (Peso) 56.17
Philippines (Peso)56.17
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)3.59
Singapore (Dollar)1.6461
South Korea (Won)1,058.10
Switzerland (Franc)1.08
Thailand (Baht)39.17
Turkev (Lira)1.393.500.00
(Military exchange rates are those
available to customers at military bank-
ing facilities in the country of issuance

ing facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany, the Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-pound.

PRECIOUS METALS

INTEREST RATES

Ignore spammers and maybe they'll go away

By JOHN MORAN

The Hartford (Conn.) Courant

All the traditional signs of the holiday season are here: the festive lights, the busy stores and the crush of spam in vour e-mail.

Yes, sad to say, the onslaught of junk e-mail has joined the list of holiday hallmarks

Spam is, of course, year-round phenomenon. But it unquestionably accelerates each November and continues right into the new year.

Much of consumers' annual retail spending takes place during this holiday shopping spree. Clearly, the junk e-mailers want their share.

You might think people wouldn't need to be warned against these solicitations. But they do. So, as a public service, I urge you: Never buy anything advertised via unsolicited commercial e-mail.

Anyone who would pollute your inbox illegally is surely capable of ripping you off, too.

Everything about these advertisements screams scam, swindle and con job. You'll probably get nothing for your money. If you get anything at all, it is likely to be some cheap trinket, a mere shadow of what you thought you were buying. Worse still, you might discov-

er that the e-mail "sale" was actually a thinly veiled excuse to pilfer your credit card num-

You'll figure that out when mysterious charges for things you never bought start turning

up on your credit-card state-

And let's face it, the only reason anyone sends spam is the hope that a few suckers will respond. Every time someone does, it encourages future blasts of millions of junk e-mails.

In time, some of the big guns fighting spam — large, wealthy and tech-savvy corporations like America Online and Microsoft might make progress against rogue spammers.

Meanwhile, it's up to Internet users to help stop spam by never responding to it. Don't even open it. Just delete it in-

That is, naturally, a nasty chore. Fortunately, there is automated assistance available for a reasonable cost. The number of anti-spam software programs available to help filter your incoming mail is large and growing.

Norton AntiSpam (\$39.95) and McAfee SpamKiller (\$39.95) are two of the best-known products in the market. But they're also faced with a host of worthy competitors, including MailFrontier (\$29.95), Deskton Qurb Anti-Spam (\$29.95) and EmailGuard Anti-Spam (\$19.99)

Most have free trials available for download if you'd like to take them for a test drive before buying. If spam's getting you down, they're worth check-

But whatever you do, don't buy them if they're advertised

To our readers

Jim Coates is on medical leave. His computer advice column will return in several weeks.



Gift card reminders

BY NANCY DUNNAN

We're coming up on holiday season, a time when many of us give those on our holiday list a gift card.

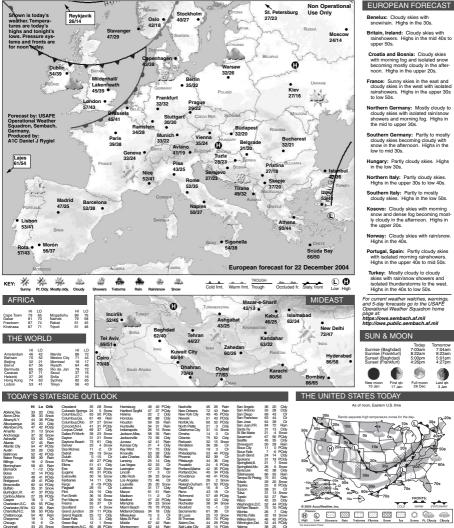
They seem like the ideal present - a no-brainer in a way. You don't need to know your niece, nephew or friend's favorite color or what size sweater they wear and the lucky recipient gets to pick out

his or her favorite thing. All true, but make sure the gift card you purchase:

cards become inactive after a certain number of months. Others come with monthly "inactivity charges" during the time period they are not used.

■ Can be replaced. You want to deal with a retailer that will issue a new card should the original be lost.

Financial adviser, economist and security analyst Nancy Dunnan is the author of "How to Invest \$50 to \$5,000." She writes a weekly column for theonlineinvestor.com



PCidy Cldy PCidy Snow Snow Cldy Rain Cldy

Give the gift of

25 85

Snow PCldy Clr

San Diego San Franci

Select safe toys with protective gear Keep burning candles out of children's reach Turn lights off when you go to bed Don't overload outlets or transformers

*

Snow Cldy Rair Cl PCldy Snow PCldy Cldy Cldy Cldy

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PCldy Cldy

Snow Cldy PCldy

Cld

12

Snow PCldy Cldy PCldy Snow Snow Cldy Rain PCldy

Rain City PCity PCity PCity

PCldy

this holiday season! *

U.S. ARMY IN EUROPE

Choose a fresh or fire-resistant artificial tree Decorate the tree with children in mind Make sure smoke alarms are operative

Keep alcohol and poison plants away from children

Church thefts

PA PITTSBURGH
The housekeeper at a Catholic parish's rectory near Pitisburgh stole more than \$173,000 from collections by rifling through the envelopes early each Monday and then making computer entries to cover up the thefts, authorities said.

Amy J. Caldwell, who worked for St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Green Tree for nearly a decade, was charged with theft.

Church officials began a general Church officials began a general state police in West Virginia found two bank deposit bags by a road in January. That prompted an audit, and the church changed the way it counted and stored its collection money — putting it into sealed, tamperproof bags.

Once that happened, the church's weekly collections increased dramatically, leading church officials to conclude that someone had been stealing money.

Off-color holiday humor

LOUISA — A weekly newspaper in eastern Kentucky has apologized for mistakenly printing sexually explicit Christmas jokes that left some blushing readers as red as Santa's suit.

The Lawrence County Storm also retrieved unsold copies of the edition with the jokes from newsstands in and around Louisa, where it is published.

Louisa Mayor Teddy Preston said he received phone calls from constituents who were angered and embarrassed by the jokes.

"It was very, very vulgar," Preston said. "It is something that shouldn't have been written in a local newspaper, or anywhere else, for that matter."

Some of the jokes were simply corny, but others put Santa in sexual situations, or made light of the religious side of Christmas.

Elva McCoy, a member of the newspaper staff, said someone on the staff had been reading the jokes on the Internet and that they had inadvertently made their way into the newspaper.

Coal-fired power plant

DENVER — State regulators have approved Colorado's first coal-fired power plant in 23 years. The \$1.35 billion facility is designed to generate 750 megawatts of electricity a day — enough for 750,000 customers. Under the agreement for the

new unit at the Comanche Generating Station in Pueblo, Xcel Energy must upgrade pollution-control equipment at the two existing units.

The Public Utilities Commission

approved the agreement 2-1. If an air quality permit is approved next year by state health officials, construction on the plant could begin in 2006.

"It's a win-win-win," said Xcel

"It's a win-win," said Acei vice president Fred Stoffel, referring to environmentalists, the company and ratepayers.

Teacher arrested

SAN JOSE — An elementary-school teacher has been arrested for alleged possession of purely secular symbol, along with Santa Claus and candy canes.

Rare bird found

BROWNSVILLE

— A bird rarely found in the United States was discovered at a wildlife refuge in the Rio Grande Valley. officials said.

The bird, a female Crimson Collared Grosbeak, was found Dec. 10 at Camp Lula Sams after it apparently crashed into a window, said Pat Burchfield, the deputy director and zoologist at the Gladys Porter Zoo. The bird did not survive striking the window.

The bird, a native of Northern Mexico, is rarely found in the United States. This is the first specimen, said Mark Lockwood, with the Texas Bird Records Committee.

Educators OK strike

MO ST. LOUIS — St. Louis teachers have authorized a strike against the state's largest school district. The vote was strike against the state's largest school district. The vote was strict s.450 teachers have worked without date has been set. The district s.450 teachers have worked without a contract since July. Missiouri law doesn't allow public school teachers to strike, but doesn't specify penalties.

Large land purchase

INCLINE VILLAGE — The largest private land holding on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe would be acquired for \$75 million under a public buyout being considered by federal land managers.

The Bureau of Land Management is considering purchase of the 777-acre parcel that features scenic Incline Lake. If acquired, the land would be transferred to the U.S. Forest Service for public recreational use.

Tattoo for nonagenarian

PA DuBOIS — Ralph Bonebreak was born to be wild — in 1910.

The 94-year-old man recently got his first tattoo at the Tainted Flesh Tattoo and Piercing Studio in his hometown. Bonebreak emerged from under the needle with a locomotive on his right arm and an eagle on his left.

A lot of men who went into the military got tattoos, but Bonebreak's 38-year career with the railroad kept him out of the service, said his friend, Eve Camuso.

"He's always wanted a tattoo, but back then the only place you could get one was at the county fair," Camuso said.

"They weren't very clean."

Bonebreak selected a train to commemorate his time with the railroad. A belt buckle inspired his eagle design.

Skyway toll raise

IN HAMMOND—The new operator of the Chicago Skyway will raise to lir tates to discourage tractor-trailer drivers from traveling during peak times. Effective Feb. 16, tolls for vehicles with three or more axles will increase during the peak hours of 4 am. to 8 p.m. Drivers of passenger cars will pay the same rates all day.



Point of entry Awoman walks by icicles on her way to Violette's Florist and Gifts in the Grand Pacific Junction of Olmsted Falls, Ohio.



Flake face William Shaffer, 9, from Tampa, Fla, braves the heavy snow and low temperatures as he plays in the snow in Banner Elk. N.C.



Snow-leaping lion

Oshana, a lioness at the San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park, uses what is left of a snowman as a catapult to reach a nearby rock in San Diego.



AMERICAN

ROUNDUP

child pornography after a student

in his classroom saw explicit pic-

tures on the teacher's computer, ac-

Christopher Casey, 44, turned

himself in to police after detectives

seized computers from his home,

his classroom and a relative's

Casey is a third-grade teacher at

Castlemont Elementary School and has worked for the school dis-

trict for 15 years, according to po-

NEW PORT RICHEY -

tions were being rehung at Pasco

County buildings after the reversal

of a county attorney's finding that

the trees were unacceptable reli-

county buildings after the initial de-

cision, which allowed them only in

"semiprivate" areas such as per-

That decision drew angry reac-

tions from residents and the Ameri-

can Center for Law & Justice, a

law firm founded by televangelist

ney said that a Christmas tree is a

In a revised decision, the attor-

Trees had been removed from

The Christmas tree decora-

cording to police.

home, authorities said.

Tree ban reversed

gious symbols.

sonal offices.

Pat Robertson

Syracuse University football player Matt Tarullo rides on a carousel with 4-year-old Karisas Sibley in Kissimmee, Fla. Tarullo was spending time with children at Give Kids The World Village, a nonprofit resort in Kissimmee for children with life-threatening illnesses.



Fifth-graders Nancy Choi, second right, and Chelsea Atkinson, far right, Jokesters, stage right joke with each other before going on stage to perform their part in "The Nutcracker" at Cimmaron Elementary School in Aurora, Colo.



From left, Hunter Taylor, Eva Len-Three little rascals hard and Gillian Wittstock with the Steppin' Out dance company perform a Little Rascals number in the annu al December dance performance in Petersburg, Alaska.



Claus with a cause Santa Claus is framed through the American flag as he waves and rings the bell at cars passing by in Fort Smith, Ark. Claus, hired by Linn's Thrift Store, was donating half his proceeds to help needy



J.R. Richardson positions a scaffold as he prepares to cut a rafter from the roof while helping dismantle the old University of Illinois Sheep Barn in Champaign. III.

Reporter drops charges

NC GRAHAM — Prosecutors have dropped criminal charges filed against a developer accused of assaulting and threatening a newspaper reporter.

The reporter asked prosecutors to drop charges against Ernie Koury Jr. after he apologized. Koury had been charged with communicating threats and simple as-

James Moffat, a reporter for The Times-News of Burlington, said that Koury grabbed him by the throat and threatened to kill him earlier this month at the Burlington Municipal Building. Koury allegedly was unhappy with the newspaper's coverage of a private club that Koury is involved with

Crying over spilled milk

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A milk truck overturned in California's Marin County, spilling 4.500 gallons of milk into Nicasio Creek and closing the roadway for 90 minutes, the California Highway Patrol said.

The truck, which had picked up a load of milk from a dairy just before the accident, ruptured and milk flowed across the road, down a hillside and into the creek.

Workers from the California Department of Fish and Game responded to the accident to oversee cleanup of the milk, which can be harmful to fish, authorities said.

Trees at a premium

HI HONOLULU — A shortage of Christmas trees in Hawaii has raised prices to more than \$200

Tree buyers camped outside a shopping center hours before dawn to await a shipment of 130 noble firs flown in from Oregon A crowd of more than 200 people had gathered by morning, when a salesman announced the trees would cost \$165 to \$200. Consumers complained that was at least twice the price charged just a few days earlier. In previous weeks, trees sold for \$30. Most Christmas trees sold in Hawaii have been delivered by cargo ships from farms in the Pacific Northwest. Last season, sellers suffered losses when hundreds went unsold, forcing them to give many trees away.

But this year, smaller orders caused a major shortage across the islands. Many major retailers sold out. But some customers rebelled.

"He thinks he's got us because he's got the trees. But we have the money, and maybe we won't pay, shouted Barbara Taylor.

Bowling alley to close

MO ST. LOUIS — The historic Western Lanes — St. Louis' last full-sized bowling alley will soon close its doors, sad news in a city that's home to the International Bowling Museum Hall of

AMF Bowling Worldwide Inc. says that next month the 36-lane bowling alley will end a run that began in 1962.

That will leave only four small alleys - two of them at Catholic parishes - in a city that once boasted about 30 bowling halls.

The Western is offering customers \$1-a-game bowling until its Jan. 30 closing

Richard Weber, AMF's district

manager, said Western financially "has really gone south," starting to lose serious money more than a year ago.

Spending most on firs

GREENWICH — Wealthy Fairfield County tops the United States in Christmas tree sales, according to a survey of farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While fresh trees sell for about \$30 in most parts of the state, the average price is \$50 to \$60 along the Gold Coast, growers say. One nursery sells North Carolina-grown Fraser firs up to 16 feet tall for \$500, including delivery and installation

Deaths from overdosing

ROANOKE — Drug overdose deaths are apparently leveling off in western Virginia after years of sharp increases.

Dr. William Massello of the state medical examiner's office says 136 area residents died of overdoses through mid-August. Last year's total was 223. This year's total won't be known for some time. since it takes several months to confirm an overdose.

Driving fatalities decline

WAUSAU — Wisconsin is on pace to have significantly fewer traffic fatalities this year and fewer than the five-year average, safety experts say.

They cite increased seat belt use, stiffer law enforcement and a tougher drunken driving law. As of Friday, 744 people died in traffic fatalities, about 9 percent fewer than at the same time a year ago, officials reported

Airport has tardy image

AZ PHOENIX — Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport ranked seventh-worst in the country among 31 major airports in on-time departures from January through October, according to U.S. Department of Transportation statistics. The tardiest airline this year in

Phoenix was Southwest Airlines. Southwest is revamping flight schedules to improve its on-time numbers, said Bill Owen, the airline's senior schedule planner

Notices e-mailed free

DE DOVER — People interested in state government can now sign up for e-mail notices about everything from regulatory changes to General Assembly votes

The free service includes most major state departments and agencies. For several years, parents in Delaware have been able to get weather-related school closing notices e-mailed to them.

Bay of Pigs museum

MIAMI — Ground was broken for a museum recalling the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961. A restored B-26 bomber will be part of the display at Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport.

Cuban-American exiles from Miami filled the ranks of the U.S.-led invasion. Ten exile pilots and four American airmen died in the attempt to dislodge Fidel Castro from power.

	AFRTS Television Schedule									
		Updated sports listi	ngs are available on the first	Scoreboard page in the spo WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER	orts section or AFN's Web si	te at http://myafn.dodmedia.	osd.mil/			
	(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-EUROPE)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-NEWS)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)		
9:00	The Wild Thornberrys	Movie "One Woman's Courage" (1994) Patty Duke, Margot Kid-	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	Nightline	NBA Basketball Teams to Be Appounced	30-Minute Meals	Jeopardy!		
9:30	The Wild Thornberrys ChalkZone (EI)	der. A killer stalks the witness	(9:46) Oprah Winfrey	Headline News ESPNews	Headline News Hardball With Chris Matthews	Armounced.	Food 911 Sensible Chic	Headline News ESPNews		
10:00	ChalkZone (EI)	who testified against him.	(:35) Guiding Light	Advisory Block	narubali With Chris Matthews		Fashion File	Pacific Report		
11:00	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	(10:48) Movie *** "Die	(100) dalaing Light	The Parkers "She's Positive"	The O'Reilly Factor		E! News Live	The Parkers "She's Positive"		
11:30	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	Hard 2" (1990) Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia. An L.A. cop	(:17) General Hospital	Arrested Development	1	NBA Fastbreak	The King of Queens	Arrested Development		
12:00	Kim Possible "Downhill"	bonnie Bedella. An L.A. cop battles terrorists in Washington.	Headline News	The 4400 'The New & Im- proved Carl Morrissey'	FOX News	SportsCenter	That '70s Show	The 4400 "The New & Im- proved Carl Morrissey"		
12:30	Kim Possible "Bueno Nacho" Planet's Funniest Animals	Movie ★★% "Bring It On"	Judge Judy Today Barbara Streisand;	The 4400 "Becoming"	Fox and Friends	College Basketball Texas Tech	Girlfriends Charmed "House Call"	The 4400 'Becoming'		
13:30	Movie ** "Balto" (1995, Adventure) Voices of Kevin Ba-	(2000, Comedy) Kirsten Dunst, Eliza Dushku, Jesse Bradford.	Dustin Hoffman; books as gifts.	Pacific Report	Fox and Friends	at lowa. (Taped)	Ally McBeal "Mr. Bo"	Pacific Report		
14:00	con, Bob Hoskins.	(:44) Movie +++ "Love &	1	The Tonight Show	rox and rhends		Ally Nicbeal Nil. DO	The Tonight Show		
15:00	Funniest Home Videos	Basketball" (2000, Drama)	Sylvester & Tweety		American Morning	College Basketball UCLA at	Any Day Now 'Still My Little			
15:30	Full House "The Volunteer"	Sanaa Lathan, Omar Epps. A passion for the game leads to	Buzz Lightyear of Star	Late Show		Michigan State. (Live)	Soldier"	Late Show		
16:00	Pokémon Max's first battle. Yu-Gi-Oh!	love for two best friends.	The Fairly OddParents		CNN Live Today		ER "No Good Deed Goes Un- nunished"			
16:30 17:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters	Inside the Actors Studio	My Life as a Teenage Robot Jeopardy!	Access Hollywood Headline News		SportsCenter	Law & Order "Hate"	Access Hollywood Headline News		
17:30	Rocket Power	moide the Addition of date	Headline News	The Late Late Show	i	орольосии	Law & Grace Flate	The Late Late Show		
18:00	SpongeBob SquarePants	Coming Attractions	ESPNews		FOX News	PGA Tour Season Review A	The Simpsons			
18:30	Rugrats	Entertainment Tonight	AFN Evening News	Dennis Miller		review of the PGA season.	Everybody Loves Raymond	Dennis Miller		
19:00	How-Grinch Stole Christmas Little Drummer Boy	Movie ** "U-571" (2000) Matthew McConaughey. Allied	The Parkers "She's Positive" Arrested Development	Countdown With Keith Olber-	FOX News	College Football Champs Sports Bowl Georgia Tech vs.	The Amazing Race	Countdown With Keith Olber-		
19:30	Gilmore Girls "Nick & Nora/Sid	sailors hatch a dangerous plan	The 4400 "The New & Im-	Countdown With Keith Olber- mann	FOX News	Syracuse. From Orlando, Fla.	Andromeda "Fair Unknown"	Countdown With Keith Olber- mann		
20:30	& Nancy"	to capture a Nazi sub.	proved Carl Morrissey"	Entertainment Studios.com	- CA INCHIO		Andronicad rail Citationii	Entertainment Studios.com		
21:00	Degrassi: Next	(:08) Movie ** * "Before	The 4400 "Becoming"	The Hot List	Studio B With Shepard Smith	Firefighter Combat Challenge	Discovery Specials: Ameri-	The Hot List		
21:30	Degrassi: Next	Sunrise" (1995) Ethan Hawke. Two young travelers share a		Headline News		The Hot List	can communicati	Headline News		
22:00	The Cosby Show	whirlwind romance in Vienna.	Headline News The Tonight Show	Good Morning America	Your World With Neil Cavuto	The Hot List First and Ten	Friends Seinfeld "The Strongbox"	Good Morning America		
22:30	Touched by an Angel 'Re-	Movie ★★% "Single White Fe-	The ronight Show		Lester Holf Live	Around the Horn	The Daily Show	-		
23:30	deeming Love"	male" (1992, Suspense)	Late Show	ł	ECOLO HOR ENC	Pardon the Interruption	Blind Date	1		
				THURSDAY, DECEMBER	23, 2004					
00:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters	(11:00) Movie * * 5 "Single	(11:30) Late Show	Play With Me Sesame	Headline News	SportsCenter	Late Night	Play With Me Sesame		
00:30	Rocket Power	White Female" (1992)	Access Hollywood	Bear in the Big Blue House	NBC Nightly News			Bear in the Big Blue House		
1:00	SpongeBob SquarePants Rugrats	(12:53) Movie *** "Lethal Weapon 3" (1992, Action) Mel	NFL Pro Bowl Selection Show	Boohbah (EI) Wheel of Fortune	ABC World News Tonight CBS Evening News	4 Qtrs	The Amazing Race	Boohbah (EI) Wheel of Fortune		
2:00	How-Grinch Stole Christmas	Gibson, Danny Glover, Joe	College Football GMAC Bowl -	Dr. Phil	The NewsHour With Jim	College Basketball Illinois vs.	Andromeda "Fair Unknown"	Dr. Phil		
2:30	Little Drummer Boy	Pesci.	- Bowling Green vs. Memphis.		Lehrer	Missouri. From St. Louis. (Live)				
3:00 3:30	Gilmore Girls "Nick & Nora/Sid & Nancy"	Movie ** "U-571" (2000) Matthew McConaughey. Allied	From Mobile, Ala. (Live)	Oprah Winfrey	Hannity & Colmes		Discovery Specials: Ameri- can Commandos	Oprah Winfrey		
4:00	Degrassi: Next	sailors hatch a dangerous plan to capture a Nazi sub.		NBC Nightly News	Headline News	NBA Basketball Memphis Grizzlies at Golden State War-	Friends	NBC Nightly News		
4:30	Degrassi: Next Sesame Street (EI)	(:08) Movie *** "Before	Headline News	Judge Judy Access Hollywood	Nightly Business Report Lou Dobbs Tonight	riors. From the Arena in Oak-	Seinfeld "The Strongbox" Breathingspace Yoga	Judge Judy Access Hollywood		
5:00 5:30	Sesame Street (EI)	Sunrise" (1995) Ethan Hawke.	ESPNews	(:25) Guiding Light	Lou Doods Tonight	land, Calif. (Live)	Caribbean Workout	(:25) Guiding Light		
6:00	Barney & Friends (EI)	Two young travelers share a whirlwind romance in Vienna	Headline News	(:13) General Hospital	Larry King Live		Body Shaping	(:13) General Hospital		
6:30	Blue's Clues		Headline News			NBA Fastbreak NBA high-	TIPical Mary Ellen	1		
7:00	Dragon Tales (EI)	Inside the Actors Studio Joanne Woodward.	Play With Me Sesame	Larry King Live	NewsNight With Aaron Brown	lights, analysis, look-ins.	The View	Legend of Tarzan		
7:30 8:00	Bob the Builder The Wiggles	Coming Attractions	Bear in the Big Blue House Boohbah (El)	Rocko's Modern Life	BET Nightly News	ESPNews SportsCenter	Emeril Live	Aaahh! Real Monsters Sabrina, the Animated Series		
8:30	Dora the Explorer	Entertainment Tonight	Wheel of Fortune	Nick News Special Edition	Tavis Smilev	Sportscenter	Lilletii Live	Nick News Special Edition		
9:00	The Wild Thornberrys	Movie ★★% "The Story Lady"	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	Nightline	NBA Basketball Teams to Be	30-Minute Meals	Jeopardy!		
9:30	The Wild Thornberrys	(1991, Drama) Jessica Tandy. A refired widow's local-access		Headline News	Navy/Marine Corps News	Announced.		Headline News		
10:00	ChalkZone (EI) ChalkZone	children's show is a hit.	(9:46) Oprah Winfrey (:35) Guiding Light	ESPNews	Hardball With Chris Matthews		Design on a Dime	ESPNews Pacific Report		
10:30 11:00	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	(10:48) Movie *** "The	(:35) Guiding Light	Advisory Block Two and a Half Men	The O'Reilly Factor		Style Star E! News Live	Pacific Report Two and a Half Men		
11:30	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	Mummy" (1999, Horror) Bren-	(:17) General Hospital	Will & Grace	1	World Sport	The King of Queens	Will & Grace		
12:00	Kim Possible "Number One"	dan Fraser, Rachel Weisz, John Hannah	Headline News	To Be Announced	FOX News	SportsCenter	That '70s Show	To Be Announced		
12:30	Kim Possible "Mind Games"	I	Judge Judy		L		Girlfriends "Merry Ex-mas"	L		
13:00	Planet's Funniest Animals Movie ** "Atlantis: The Lost	Movie *** "Sleepless in Seattle" (1993, Comedy-Dra-	Today Clay Aiken; George Foreman.	CSI: Crime Scene Investiga- tion "XX"	Fox and Friends	College Football GMAC Bowl - - Bowling Green vs. Memphis	Charmed The sisters' night- mares spring to life.	CSI: Crime Scene Investiga- tion "XX"		
13:30	Empire" (2001) Voices of	Seattle" (1993, Comedy-Dra- ma) Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, Bill		Pacific Report	Fox and Friends	- Bowling Green vs. Memphis. From Mobile, Ala. (Taped)	Ally McBeal "Hat's Off to Larry	Pacific Report		
14:30	Michael J. Fox, James Garner.	Pullman.		The Tonight Show	1		l ·	The Tonight Show		
15:00	Funniest Home Videos	(2:54) Movie ***: "The Fugi-	Legend of Tarzan		American Morning	SportsCenter	Any Day Now 'It's Not Karma,	1		
15:30	Full House "Gotta Dance"	tive" (1993) Harrison Ford. An innocent man must evade the	Aaahh! Real Monsters	Late Show	CMM I in a Tarden	NEL Come of the West	It's Life"	Late Show		
16:00 16:30	Pokémon Yu-Gi-Oh!	law as he pursues a killer.	Sabrina, the Animated Series Nick News Special Edition	Access Hollywood	CNN Live Today	NFL Game of the Week	ER "No Strings Attached"	Access Hollywood		
17:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters	Showbiz Moms & Dads	Jeopardy!	Headline News	i	SportsCenter	Law & Order "Ramparts"	Headline News		
17:30	Rocket Power	1	Headline News	The Late Late Show	1	ľ		The Late Late Show		
18:00	SpongeBob SquarePants	Ebert-Movies	Destinations		FOX News	NBA Basketball Teams to Be	The Simpsons "C.E.D'OH"			
18:30	Rugrats Rudolph the Red-Nosed	Entertainment Tonight Movie ** "Secret Santa"	AFN Evening News Two and a Half Men	Dennis Miller	FOX News	Announced.	Everybody Loves Raymond Summerland "Secrets"	Dennis Miller		
19:00 19:30	Reindeer	(2003, Christmas) Jennie Garth.	Will & Grace	Countdown With Keith Olber-	FUX News		Summenand Secrets	Countdown With Keith Olber-		
20:00	7th Heaven "Stand Up"	A cynical reporter searches for a mysterious philanthropist.	To Be Announced	mann	FOX News		The Practice "Final Judgment"	mann		
20:30	1			Entertainment Studios.com	1	NBA Fastbreak NBA high-	Ellenor fights for a death row inmate	Entertainment Studios.com		
21:00	Sabrina, the Teenage Witch	(8:48) Movie *** "Les Mis-	CSI: Crime Scene Investiga-	The Hot List	Studio B With Shepard Smith	lights, analysis, look-ins.	mmale.	The Hot List		
21:30	Sabrina, the Teenage Witch The Cosby Show	erables" (1998) Liam Neeson. A French fugitive is pursued by	tion "XX" Headline News	Headline News Good Morning America	Your World With Neil Cavuto	The Hot List First and Ten	Friends	Headline News Good Morning America		
22:00	Home Improvement	an obsessed police officer.	The Tonight Show	GOOD MOTHING AMERICA	Tour world with Inell CBVUID	NFL Live	Friends Seinfeld "The Wizard"	Good Morning America		
23:00	Touched by an Angel 'Doodle-	Movie *** "Raiders of			Lester Holt Live	Around the Horn	The Daily Show	1		
23:30	bugs"	the Lost Ark" (1981)	Late Show	1		Pardon the Interruption	Blind Date	1		



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FACES

Cruz. Havek bond

Spanish movie star Penelope Cruz and Mexican actress Salma Hayek hit it off from day one during the filming of "Bandidas," a Western about two female outlaws set in 19th-century Mexico.



'We've enjoyed it from the first day until yesterday," said Cruz, having completed about 14 weeks of working with Havek, mostly in the northern Mexican state of Durango, "We have an incredible communication

Written and produced by French filmmaker Luc Besson, "Bandidas" tells the story of two women - one rich, the

Cruz, left, and Havek other poor - who overcome their differences to work together robbing banks. The movie finishes shooting this week and does not yet

have a release date Havek, who was born in Coatzacoalcos in the Gulf state of Veracruz, said her role as a Robin Hood-style bandit came easy after a piece of advice from

"The first thing he told us was it's very important that these women be heroes but never stop being women, that they not be women trying to be men," Hayek said.

Stars pitch in for hurricane fund-raiser

A poster signed by **Jennifer Lopez** and a guitar signed by **Wyclef Jean** are on sale in an MTV Internet auction to raise money for hurricane victims.

Seventy-five percent of proceeds from the Caribbean Relief Auction will go to American



Red Cross efforts in Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands, according to MTV's Web site. The auction runs through Monday.

Other items include a poster signed by Britney Spears, tickets to "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart"

and a travel package to Grenada "I think fans pay attention," Jean "They are aware of the situa-

Angelina Jolie might

consider asking for a

new man this Christmas.

tion and want to do what they can to contribute The hip-hop star this week re-

leased a new music video, under the auspices of the U.N. World Food Program, to help Haitian victims of floods and rising political violence. He also has set up the charity Yele Haiti to help his impoverished

Scott shares her trauma

R&B singer Jill Scott says she was raped over 10 years ago by her then-boyfriend.

After dating the unidentified man sporadically since she was 15, Scott says in the January issue of Sister 2 Sister magazine that when she was about 19, she visited him at his apartment

"I came over there just to be around him 'cause I liked him so much. I just wanted to be around him, it didn't matter." Scott, 32, told the magazine, "He attacked me, I mean, I'm down for getting buck wild just like anybody else, but this wasn't that. It was ripping my clothes off, me saying, 'Wait! No! Don't! Stop! What are you doing?' Scott says that she didn't realize what had occurred until she was recently writing in her journal

Scott credits her husband of three years, Lyzel Williams, for helping her: "He's a genuine person with a huge heart. And the way he loves me is just ridiculous.

Updike's book find

John Updike, like many a good book-lover, found the cellar of his house and shelves in his barn were being overrun with books he and his wife have collected over the years "They were just collecting dust and mouse droppings,"

the author told The Boston Globe in Friday's edition. Their solution? Find someone who would pay for the used books, and haul them away

"I'm at an age when you think about lightening your load, rather than dumping it on your heirs," said Updike, 72. a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner.

Mark Stolle, owner of Manchester by the Book store, bought Updike's collection.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

A celebrity Christmas list

One columnist has a few ideas on what to get for those naughty Hollywood stars (and a few of the nice ones)

BY LUAINE LEE Scripps Howard News Service

"t's that time of year again, time to think of Christmas wishes you'd give the stars you've met during the year if you could.

Julia Roberts already received her Christmas package with the birth of twins. Being a mother will probably provide the gift she most needs: a little humility. A blubbery waistline, a touch of colic, double 2 o'clock feedings.

would be a dandy donation to Hollywood's entire feminine

contingent, and how about a bottle of mouthwash for Colin

Farrell and a one-way ticket back to Australia for Russell Crowe? The gift of silence would

be the best thing for Tommy Lee Jones,

who can't open his mouth without berat-

ing someone. And for Jack Nicholson, a

portrayal that does not depend on the

Good Ol' Boy persona to get him

We could siphon off some great

Tony Goldwyn and David

roles for underrated actors like Jeffrey Donovan, Don Johnson, Jeff Bridges, Bonnie Bedelia, Dana Dela-

A trip to India with medi-

tation on the mount might be just the ticket

for Helen Hunt, and for Alec Baldwin, a

seat in local govern-

For David Ducho-

vny, a role that match-

es his stout intellect, and for director Wes

Craven, a movie that

hasn't a single scream in

A welcome gift might

ment

loads of dirty diapers - all that should conspire to make

Julia a little less contrary. For Angelina Jolie, a fine present would be a decent husband-father to go with the newfound mother in her

How about a wedding ring for Goldie Hawn, a teething ring for Nicolas Cage's new wife, and for Tom Hanks, a role that takes him beyond his endless goodwill into a tougher dimension? A healthy physique wouldn't be amiss for Renee Zellweger, instead of the emaciated one she pursues when she finishes with plump little "Bridget Jones

Jennifer Connolly could use some Milk Duds and a Mc-Donald's gift certificate Outlawing the toxic Botox

And for the nation's desnerate housewives. about a hunky 2005 calendar featuring Josh Duhamel, Michael Weatherly, Antonio Banderas, Aaron Eckhardt, Jude Law, Taye Diggs, Neal

Fox and Matt Damon — not only gorgeous but good guys in the bargain. May director Jonathan find a directing Frakes project that lights his afterburners and Oliver Stone

that's No. 2 with a bullet for a few fresh roles under the Neil Sedaka, healed vocal tree this year. cords for Julie Andrews and an Emmy for Geoffrey Rush's phenomenal performance

as Peter Sellers. Tropical islands with no e-mails for retiring chief Sheri Lansing and Alexander Payne's next script for her hus-

band, director Billy Friedkin. May CBS get a clue, Dan Rather get a civilian job and

The best gift for Dakota Fanning would be a childhood, and for Britney Spears, adulthood. For Michael Eisner, the job of CEO at

> defecting animators to the fold. It would be a charitable gift if reality shows would get real and fictional drama would come out of hiding.

> > about a broadcast network gig, and the folks at "Saturday Night Live," a berth on cable? For John Goodman, a FUNNY sitcom, for Stephen Bochco (who's defecting to cable), may net-

work censors be a remembrance things past.

The best gift for "Jack and Bobby" would be a third

For Meg Ryan, how about some of the roles that go to Nicole Kidman? And for Showtime, some of the respect that always goes to

and skinny as a rail.

be an extra nanny for Jada Pinkett Smith, a better talk show for John McEnroe funnier guests for Ellen DeGeneres and early retirement for David Letterman.



find one that doesn't. A song

Tom Hanks may like to find

FX find another "Nip/Tuck."



Renee Zellweger may want to seek out a happy medium for her body, somewhere between Bridget Jones

Horoscope

Time is the most valuable com modity. We can't waste it vacillating holding out for an upgrade or haggling for the best price -**Holiday Mathis**

too many practical actions must be taken in the next few days. Mercury project ing forward helps us do the same without encum brance. Earth-sign influences bring thought, emotion

and deed together as one TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 22). Risks pay off huge this year! In the next four weeks, run don't walk -- to invest in education or equipment that could change your work and financial luck. Old loves return, and family reunions are healing in February. A whirlwind romance in the middle of spring makes you feel irresistible.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The more money you make, the better you feel — but is that right? Self-worth is not to be confused with net worth. Try and see all your contributions to the world as value able, not just the ones that bring home dollar signs.

But don't make hasty decisions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When your mind is uncluttered by emotional thoughts, you're brilliant. Either eliminate upsetting influences or decide not to be upset by them. Romance can be found in your very own neighborhood.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

There's no shortage of stress these days. Make "Health first" your motto When your physical body is in balance, you can go about the business of doing everything you tell yourself you're going to do.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Motivating yourself is tricky business. When there's something you are loathe to do, all those less-than-loathsome tasks suddenly seem like gravy! This is how papers

get filed and clothes get folded. LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The

darling of your world pulls a less-than-darling maneuver. Should you be quick to forgive? Not before you fully understand the motivation

behind this action. Do more investigating

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A friend tries to help you but may be underqualified for what it is you

need. Right now, it's better to rely on people for what they are already good at. Get more specific about your expectations, and then put the word out.

LIBRA (Sept.

23-0ct. 23). If you're not going to make a profit, you may as well not make a profit while slacking in front of the TV instead of working your fingers to the bone! An expert strategy ensures

you're working both smart

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You don't want to be the exception to every rule: you just are. Accept your special status instead of trying to fit into the norm. Later, you'll learn that what you're now calling the "norm" is about as wacky as it gets

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). People are depending on you. Don't even think about calling in sick - you're definitely the brains of your team now. If it weren't for you, the whole operation might temporarily shut down.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan.

19). You're definitely on the minds of many. Friends drop by, and people call out of the blue. Initially, you could be flustered - you hate to be caught unawares. In retrospect, you'll be happy you took time out to chat

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your ultimate goal is only unattainable until you begin to pursue it. Someone powerful has a crush on you. Enjoy the boost to your ego, but don't feel you have to do some-

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

thing about it.

Finances depend on how innovative you can be. Satisfied customers come to the fore. Encourage people to put their good comments in writing. Testimonials could help you move to the next level in your business

Creators Syndicate

Peanuts



SURE .. I ALSO WISHED HIM A VERY HAPPY HANUKKAH...











IN THE NEVATIVE DECEDE



DID I JUST SAY I'M DOING A BAD JOB AND ASK YOU TO PUNISH ME? I AM CONCERNED BECAUSE MY OBJEC-TIVES ARE VAGUE AS A RESULT, I AM NOT INSPIRED TO

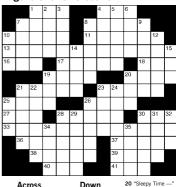
ACHIEVE MY FULL POTENTIAL ... AND

AND UNMEASURABLE





Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Sylvester or Stimpy
- 4 Speedwagon
- 7 Relaxation
- 8 Toss choice 10 Wiser, maybe
- 11 Motor
- 13 Information
- distribution center
- 17 Plus-column entry
- 18 Pontiac letters
- 19 Categorize
- 20 Singer Campbell 21 Teatime treat
- 23 Shakespeare's
- output
- 25 Gloomy
- 26 Move turbulently
- 27 Last (Ahhr)
- 28 Playground fixture
- 30 Comprehend
- 33 Bookkeeper's place

THAT'S WHAT

- 36 Extras
- 37 Nonsense
- 38 Hackneved
- 39 Flusive
- 40 Peculiar
- 41 Deteriorate

Mediterranean

5 Square dance

7 Big name in scat

9 With little leeway

10 Halloween abbr.

15 Vast expanse of

12 Sen. Kefauver

14 Capri, e.g.

time

19 Sunnorting

group

6 Medlev

8 Nervous

- Down 1 West Pointer 2 On the
- 23 Vintage 3 Lay of the land
- videogame 4 Gamut
 - 24 Match alternative

21 One's

25 French nobleman

performances

22 Witty folks

- 26 "Lather, ---,
- repeat" 28 Fancy fiddle
- 29 Use handily
- 30 Self-reproach
- 31 Catch sight of 32 Ball-bearing item
- 34 Peacekeeping
 - alliance
- 35 Sandwich snack

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Ρ	Α	D	S		٧	Т	Р		1	К	Е	Α
Ε	R	_	Е		Α	С	Е		Т	0	R	Ν
Α	С	Ν	Ε		L	0	Ν	G	S	Н	0	Т
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12-22 CRYPTOOUIP

JGY'P UAUF MEFFZ

EFGHYJ MGWYX. W RHUXX

w ' K ZGH KWRVP XEZ

EAUFXU P G MVEYRU Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I HEARD OF A FINE CARPENTER WHO PROUDLY SAID "ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MY SHELF!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals R

Porn habit requires counseling

Confidential to my

readers: Although I know you're busy beyond belief preparing for the holidays, please take a minute to go to your computers and send greetings to our troops This is the loneliest time of the

year for these brave young men and women, many of whom are away from their families for the first time. Type in www.OperationDear Abby.net and let them know we care.

Dear Abby: I have been married for 10 years. I have always had fantasies about exposing my wife naked to other men. "Hazel" is a deep sleeper, and in college, I exposed her countless times for my roommates to see. (I pretended to be asleep.) From the time we were married, I took pictures of her while she slept. I posted a good number of them on Internet norn sites, making no attempt to blur her face, which would have

I saved each porn site photo spread of her into a file on my computer

Well, my wife found the file. We are now in marriage counseling, but I still have the fantasies. I know what I did was wrong, but I did it anyway. I don't

Dear Abby want to lose my wife Please help. - Ashamed in Virginia

Dear Ashamed: You need more help than I can give you in a letter. You violated your wife's trust, treated her like an object, and while I applaud the fact that you are get ting marriage counseling, counseling of a

different sort is also in order. Please ask your doctor for a referral to a psychiatrist ASAP.

Dear Abby: My co-worker has planned his own retirement dinner party at \$45 a head, including tax and gratuity.

That might not be much to managers and supervisors who receive large salaries, but for those of us who don't, that's a lot of money. What's ironic is he expects an additional \$10 from each of us for a gift.

A luncheon date with 90 percent of the staff had already been confirmed. However, yesterday a flier was distributed announcing a dinner on the same date the luncheon was scheduled. Our lunch date was canceled without consulting us.

We asked him to reschedule the lunch, told him the dinner party was too expensive, and asked if he would make the \$10 gift optional. Are we unreasonable, or is he?

- Wondering in San Francisco Dear Wondering: Wonder no more. He is. Please don't allow vourselves to be manipulated into spending more than you can afford on this anything BUT shy and retiring co-worker

Letters for this column - with ye Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at to Abby on the Internet at http://www.uexpress.com/deara Universal Press Syndicate

one letter to each square

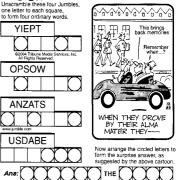
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OPSOW

ANZATS

USDABE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Yesterday's

Family Circus

Jumbles: SNACK OUTDO SCHOOL GOBLET Good looks can attract these Answer: GOOD LOOKS

Help cousin find place in new town

Dear Annie: I am 10

years old. My cousin, "Zoe." just moved to our town and is going to my school. We're in the same classes, in the same youth group and in the same after-school activities, and we are going to the same summer camp.

Zoe is really nice, but we live in a small town. and it can take a while to meet new people. So, she hangs out with my friends and me a lot, and even though I have no problem with that, some of my friends are hinting that they'd like her to leave us alone once in a while

I love my cousin, but I could use a little breathing room.

- Cousin Problems Dear Cousin: Can you introduce Zoe to some schoolmates with whom she might have something in common? Perhaps she would like to join a sport or after-school group that doesn't include you. Zoe is still new to your area and needs time to find her own friends and her own



interests. She is relying on you to make the transition easier, so try to be patient with her You won't regret it.

Dear Annie: I've heard people complain about the overblown Christmas newsletters they receive. You know what I'm talking about — the husband got his

third promotion, the son was offered a full scholarshin to Harvard, the daughter was voted homecoming queen. the 9-year-old plays three musi cal instruments, the oldest daughter married an ambassador the first grandchild is a genius who already speaks three languages. So here's my Christmas Letter

Revenge. I hope you will print it. - Had Enough of That Dear Had Enough: Thanks for a good chuckle.

Here it is:

Dear Everybody: Once again, the happy holidays are upon us. We have so many things to appreciate. Bob got a promotion to

french fry specialist at the fast-food joint, so we were able to purchase two more buckets at the flea market. We now have enough for all the holes in the leaking roof. We've actually collected so much water that we can flush the

toilets every day. The Feds found this year's marijuana crop before we could harvest it all, but we should make it through the winter with the profits from the still. Jimmy got out on good behavior just in time for Christmas and the birth of his fifth child. Fortunately, all four mothers have stopped fighting over him. Junior ran off again and it gets harder and harder to get the sheriff to look for him. Just because he's 35 doesn't mean he

I hope that the holidays find you whole and happy.

— Bertha Mae, Bob, Jimmy

can take care of himself.

Junior and all the Grandkids Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox/ecomeast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndi-date, 5777 W. Century Blwd. Suiter 90, Los Angeles, CA 90045.



"Sorry, we don't have a pear tree."

WHEN GIVING JEWEIRY MAKESURE IT WON'T TURN GREEN SPRINGTIME

TAXA 12/2L

Dennis 1







"Be back by supportime, Hump. always, you be careful!"



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AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.-NBA: Dallas at New AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.—NBA: Dallas at New York (did).
AFN-Sports, 1 p.m.—College basketball: Texas Tech at lowa (did).
Can the control of the con

Thursday

AFN-Atlantic, 2 a.m.—College football:
GMAC Bowl, Memphis vs. Bowling Green.
AFN-Sports, 2 a.m.—College basketball: IlliAFN-Sports, 4 a.m.—Pro basketball: Memphis at Golden State.
AFN-Sports, 1 p.m.—College football:
GMAC Bowl, Memphis vs. Bowling Green

(UIII).

AFN-Sports, 4 p.m.—Pro football: NFL Films
Game of the Week I (dld).

AFN-Sports, 6 p.m.—Pro basketball: Denver at Seattle (dld).

Friday

AFN-Radio, 12:30 a.m.—College football: Fort Worth Bowl, Cincinnati vs. Marshall. AFN-Atlantic, 1 a.m.—College basketball: Richmond at Pittsburgh. AFN-Sports, 2 am.—Pro basketball: Minnesota at San Antonio.

sota at San Antonio.

AFN-Atlantic, 2 am.—College basketball:
Providence at Memphis.

AFN-Radio, 345 am.—college football: Pioneer Pure Vision Bowl, UCLA vs. Wyomling.

AFN-Sports, 4:20 am.—Pro basketball:
Miami at Sacramento.

All Times Central European Time; did indi-cates delayed broadcast. All listings are sub-ject to change. Visit www.myafn.net for more information.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press men's college baskethall poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Dec. 19, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one post for a 25th-place vote and last week's

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Illinois (50)	10-0	1,727	1
2. Kansas (15)	7-0		
3. Oklahoma St. (5)	8-0	1.628	4
4. North Carolina	8-1	1.476	5
5. Wake Forest	9-1	1.427	6
6. Duke	8-0	1,427	7
7. Syracuse	0.1	1.307	8
8. Kentucky	7-1	1 220	9
9. Georgia Tech	7-1	1 210	3
10. Pittsburgh	0.0	1.115	10
11. Connecticut	5-1	964	11
12. Washington	0 1	758	
13. Gonzaga	0.1	732	22
14. Arizona	0.1	720	15
15. Texas	1-2	703	15
16. N.C. State			
17. Iowa	9-1	689 658	12
18. Louisville	6-2	618	13
19. Alabama	9-1	607	17
20. George Washington	7-1	4/5	19
21. Mississippi St.	9-2		
22. Cincinnati	7-0	297	25
23. Michigan St.	6-2	279	21
24. Maryland	6-2	239	23
25. Virginia		200	
Others receiving votes: N	Marguett	e 69.	Bos-
ton College 51, Wisconsin	19, Okl	ahom	a 15.
New Mexico 13, Arkansas	12. Ored	on 11	Ha-
waii 8. Creighton 7. Notre I	Dame 7.	Wichit	a St.
6. West Virginia 4. Miami :	3. Florida	a 2. Fr	esno
St. 2, Iowa St. 2, Old Domir	nion 2. A	meric	an U.
1. Texas A&M-Corpus Chr	isti 1.		

Men's Top 25 schedule

No. 3 Oklahoma State vs. Northwestern

No. 4 North Carolina vs. Vermont No. 13 Gonzaga vs. E. Washington at Spo No. 13 Gorizatga vs. E. Washington G. 22-kane Arena No. 14 Arizona vs. Manhattan No. 16 North Carolina State vs. Brigham

No. 17 Iowa vs. Texas Tech at the United Center enter No. 18 Louisville vs. Indiana-Purdue-India-

napolis No. 23 Michigan State vs. UCLA

NO. 25 Michigan State Vs. OCEA

Wednesday's games

No. 1 Illinois vs. Missouri at the Savvis Center, St. Louis

No. 2 Kansas vs. Wisconsin-Milwaukee at
Kemper Arena

No. 5 Wake Forest at New Mexico

No. 7 Syracuse vs. Rice No. 8 Kentucky vs. William & Mary No. 9 Georgia Tech vs. Charleston South

No. 11 Connecticut vs. Central Conn.t St. at the Hartford Civic Center

No. 12 Washington vs. Sacred Heart No. 15 Texas vs. Centenary No. 18 Louisville vs. New Orleans or Austin

Peay
No. 19 Alabama vs. Texas A&M-Corpus
Christi
No. 21 Mississippi St. vs. Jacksonville St. at
Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson, Miss.
No. 22 Cincinnati vs. La Salie
Thursday's games

No. 10 Pittsburgh vs. Richmond No. 20 George Washington at Florida Inter

national No. 24 Maryland vs. American

No. 25 Virginia vs. Loyola Marymount Friday's game No. 12 Washington vs. Housto Saturday's games No games scheduled Sunday's games No games scheduled

Monday's men's scores

Wooder III. Westiminator, Pa. 79
Vestiva BB, COVT 900TH
Album 12, Delaware 46
Delaware 56, Delaware 56
Exembel 90, Subman 12, Delaware 56
Exembel 90, Subman 12, Delaware 56
Exembel 90, Subman 12, Delaware 56, Dela

Ferris St. 93, S. Indiana 82 Wayne, Mich. 74, Indianapolis 68 Outrigger Hotels Rainbow of First Round Hawaii 54, Long Beach St. 45 Oral Roberts 81, Georgetown 63

AP Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Dec. 19, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one

ioint for a 25th-place anking:	vote and	last we
	Record	Pts P
1. LSU (45)	10-0	1,125
2. Stanford	8-0	1,056
3. Duke	10-1	994
4. Texas	5-2	924
5. Baylor	9-1	914
6. North Carolina	9-1	898
7. Notre Dame	10-1	889
8. Connecticut	4-1	813
9. Tennessee	7-2	774
0. Ohio St.	10-1	772
1. Michigan St.	9-1	696

INSIDE THE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS ASSN

UNC-Greeniboro 73, N.C.-Wilmington 68
W. Carollina 74, Buddwith 2000 March 20

12. Texas Tech 13. Minnesota 14. Boston College 15. Georgia 16. Vanderbilt 16. Vanderbili 17. Maryland 18. Iowa 19. DePaul 20. UCLA 21. Purdue 22. Houston 23. Kansas St. 24. Rutgers 25. Utah Others recei 396 18 301 24 262 21 258 16 224 20 200 19 147 25 72 22

25. Utaĥ
Others recelving votes: Arizona 45, New
Mexico 38, Arizona 51: 36, Richmond 36, Nc.
State 24, Oregon 24, Illinois 22, Villanova 18,
Tulsa 16, Iowa 51: 10, Temple 9, Virginia Tech
9, West Virginia a. Wake Forest 6, Florida 51.
5, Penn 51: 5, TCD 5, Aubburn 3, Charlotte 2,
Chattanooga 2, Wis-Green Bay 2.

Women's Top 25 schedule

Women's Top 25 schedule

No. 1.50 at 20 years and schools

No. 2.50 at 20 years and years

No. 2.50 at 20 years and years

No. 2.50 at 20 years

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No. 2.50

No games scheduled
Saturday's games
No games scheduled
Sunday's games
No games scheduled

No games so Monday's game
No. 8 Connecticut vs. George Mason

Monday's women's scores

Yale 79, Morgan St. 2007M.
Alconn St. 61, Jackson/lile St. 58
Ark-Little Rock 61, McNeese 51, 55
Ark-Little Rock 61, 15
Ark-Little Rock

TOURNAMENTS
Challenger Classic
First Round
Glenville St. 58, Fort Valley St. 48
Shaw 74, N. Kertucky 65
Fun in the Sun Shootout
Championship
Oral Roberts 59, UMKC 52
Third Place
W. Kentucky 84, Memphis 64
Hilton Woodland Hills Beach Cl

ach Classic First Re First Round perdine 79, Wright St. 68 derbilt 86, BYU 47

Vanderbilt 86, BYU 47
Mississippi State Classic
Championship
Mississippi St. 81, Louisiana-Monro
Third Place
San Jose St. 63, Grambling St. 58
San Juan Shootout
First Round
Charlotte 98, Puerto Piro-Mayaguer

Prist Round
Charlotte 98, Puerto Rico-Mayaguez 43
Florida St. 65, Fordham 51
Northwestern 66, N. Iowa 58
Towson 59, Toledo 51
FYMIRTION EXHIBITION S, Utah 72, Utah Valley St. 70

Skiing

Men's World Cup

Tuesday
At Flachau, Austria
Giant Slalom
1. Thomas Grandi, Canada, 2:15.90 (1:08.08, 1:07.82)...

2. Didier Cuche, Switzerland, 2:16.05 (1:07.65, 1:08.40). (16)7.65, 108.40). (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6) (1.6)

9. Manfred Moelgg, Italy, 2:18.15 (1:09.83,

(1:09.13, 1:09.24). www.een, 2:18.37 12. Dane Spencer, United States, 2:18.47 (1:10.01, 1:08.46), 13. Erik Schlopy, United States, 2:18.50 (1:09.22, 1:09.25), 14. Arnold Rieder, Italy, 2:18.67 (1:09.38, 1:09.25).

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Women's World Cup

Tuesday
At St. Moritz, Switzeland
Superior
Device Superior
Dev 11. Emily Brydon, Canada, 1:16.01. 12. Fraenzi Aufdenblatten, Switzerland,

1:16.03.
13. Anja Paerson, Sweden, Sweden,
1:16.09.
14. Isolde Kostner, Italy, Italy, 1:16.11.
15. Elisabeth Goergi, Austria, 1:16.13.
Overall World Cup Standings
(After 10 events).
1. Tanja Poutailene, Finland, 441.

TANK McNamara

Of 16 2004 BROW WHILE \$1 SINGS THEORY S. D.S. AND ALL SINCE YOU GREW THE SECOND HEAD YOU WERE INJECTING WAS FLAXSEED OIL? ARE YOU ABLE TO SWITCH-HIT?

2. Anja Pierson, Sweden, 413.
2. Anja Pierson, Sweden, 413.
3. Hilds Gerg, Germany, 33.
5. Hilds Gerg, Germany, 33.
6. Hilds Gerg, Germany, 33.
6. Martina, 20.
6. Germany, 13.
6. Martina, 20.
6. Martina, 20

Deals

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
BASEBALL
BASEBALL
BANAHEM ANGELS-Algred to terms with
SS Orlando Cabrera on a four-year contract.
BALTIMORE. ORNOLES—Agreed to Term and
AND CABRET STATE STATE OF THE STATE OF THE

erts. CLEVELAND INDIANS—Agreed to terms with 2B Ronnie Belliard on a one-year con-

ract.

DETROIT TIGERS—Agreed to terms with OF Nex Sanchez and C Brandon Inge on

Alex Sancrez and consumers with one-year contracts.

MINNESOTA TWINS—Agreed to terms with OF Jacque Jones, DH Matthew LeCroy, 2B Luis Rivas, RHP Matt Guerrier and OF Michael Ryan on one-year contracts.

el Ryan on one-year contracts.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS—Agreed to terms
with RHP Chad Bradford, RHP Tim Harikkala
and 28 Mark Ellis on one-year contracts.

SEATILE MARINERS—Acquired RHP Sean
Green from Colorado for RHP Aaron Taylor.

Designated RHP Rett Johnson for assign-

Designation for rest. Joinson for assign-TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS—Agreed to terms with RHP Rob Bell on a one-year contract and C Timi Laker, 3B Paranton Largon and OF TEXAS RANGERS—Agreed to terms with OF David Deliuco for a two-year contract care may be a two-year contract. Send RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the MPD Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the Rebrail Leave RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse of the RHP Steve Andrade outright to Syracuse outright to Syracuse outright to Syracuse of the Syracuse outright to Syracuse outrig

to Syracuse of the IL.

National League

CHICAGO CUBS—Agreed to terms with INF
Jose Macias on a one-year contract.

CNCINNAT REDS—Agreed to terms with
LHP Kent Marcker on a two-year contract.
28 D Angelo Jimero on a one-year contract.
28 D Angelo Jimero on a one-year contract contract.
28 D Angelo Jimero on a one-year contract.

and 38 Travis Chapman on a minor league contract.

FLORIDA MARILINS—Named Mike Mordea.

FLORIDA MARILINS—Named Mike Mordea.

FLORIDA MARILINS—Named Mike New York-Pern Legale. ASSIgned RHP Mike New Lot Albuquerque of the PCL.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS—Agreed to terms with LHP Wilson Alvarez on a two-year contract and RHP Glovanni Carraz, INF Olmedo Saenz and 38 Jose Walentin on one-year contracts. Calmed LHP Prank Brooks off walvest. tracts. Claimed LHP Frank Brooks off waiv-ers from Pittsburgh.

MONTREAL EXPOS—Agreed to terms with RHP T.J. Tucker and LHP Joey Eischen on

RHP T.J. Tucker and LHP Joey Elschen on one-year contracts. NEW YORK METS—Agreed to terms with C Vance Wilson on a one-year contract. Named Russ Bove amateur scouting director, Bryan Lambe coordinator of professional scouting, Rudy Terrasas assistant amateur scouting director, Doug Gassaway Texas and Louislana area supervisor and Fred Mazuca southern California and Mexi-

Fred Mazuca southern California and Mexi-co area supervisor.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES—Agreed to terms with LHP Aaron Fultz on a one-year contract. Designated C Michel Hernander for assign-ment. Sold the contract of RHP Aaron My-ette to Tohoku Rakuten of Japan's Pacific

League.
PITSBURGH PIRATES—Agreed to terms
with 1B Daryle Ward on a one-year contract.
Named Trevor Gooby director of Florida op-

rations. ST. LOUIS CARDINALS—Agreed to terms with RHP Mike Lincoln on a one-year con-

with Riff Allies Lincoln on a one-year contact.

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ery football coach.

LSU—Announced sophomore F Regis

coundjia has left the men's basketball team.

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE—Named Norman Jo-

massissiery OULLEGE—redried Normân Jo-seph football coach. Te-pismissed sopho-more G Robert Frazier from the men's bas-ketball team for violating team rules. OHIO STATE-Suspended QB Troy Smith for violating team and NCAA rules. SOUTHERN CALIPONINA—Announced the resignation of Rick Majerus, men's basket-ball coach.

Iverson hits 50 again, but 76ers lose to Jazz

Allen Iverson was unstoppable again, hitting long jumpers and running floaters from every angle on the court.

Yao Ming just parked his big body under the basket and made one easy layup after another.



With a dazzling display of quickness and shooting, the 6-foot Iverson scored 51 points Monday night, becoming only the seventh player in NBA history to reach at least 50 in consecutive games.

But he fouled out with 4.5 seconds left, setting up Mehmet Okur's winning free throws in Utah's 103-101 victory at Philadelphia.

"If a guy's going well, you milk it. You just keep running the same play over and over until they stop it," Iverson said. That's exactly what the Houston Rockets did,

going down low time and time again to the 7-foot-6 Yao, who finished with a season-high 40 points in a 114-102 victory over the visiting Raptors

"It seemed like he was just imbedded in the paint," Toronto's Eric Williams said. "It seemed like he spent 20 seconds in there sometimes.

Tracy McGrady added 34 points and 12 rebounds for Houston, which set a season high for points. Yao also grabbed 10 rebounds and shot 13-for-16 from the field.

Only one of Yao's baskets - an 11-foot turnaround jumper late in the fourth quarter - came from more than 9 feet out. He hit five layups and four dunks, one 5-foot shot and two 9-footers. He also made 14 of 18 free throws.

At Philadelphia, Iverson followed up his 54-point game Saturday in Milwaukee with another gem. becoming the first Sixers player to score 50 in back-to-back games and the first Philadelphia player to accomplish the feat since Wilt Chamberlain for the Warriors in 1962

The last NBA player to score 50 points in consecutive games was Antawn Jamison in December 2000 with Golden State. Iverson joined Rick Barry, Elgin Baylor, Chamberlain, Bernard King, Michael Jordan and Jamison as the only players to accomplish the feat.

Iverson scored on a variety of shots, hitting three-pointers, off-balance drives and a reverse left-handed layup that brought the crowd to its feet. He went 18-for-31 from the field, including 4-for-6 from three-point range, and 11-for-17 from the line. He also had six assists.

"He puts up 50 points two nights in a row and he's still looking for us," teammate Kyle Korver said. "It's pretty amazing."

Iverson scored 21 in the third quarter to help the Sixers overcome a 16-point halftime deficit, only to watch from the bench as the comeback fell short. After Okur hit his foul shots Willie Green missed a runner, ending Utah's seven-game road losing streak and three-game skid overall.

Bulls 92, Trail Blazers 87: At Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 23 points with Michael Jordan in attendance, and the Bulls won their fourth straight for the first time since Jordan's 1998 championship



76ers guard Allen Iverson questions a technical foul on him. He scored 50 points, but he fouled out late in the game and his foul led to the Jazz's winning points.

team won 13 in a row.

Suns 107, Nuggets 105: Amare Stoudemire had 32 points and nine rebounds, and Quentin Richardson tipped in a shot at the buzzer to help Phoenix extend its winning streak to nine.

Richardson finished with 19 points and seven rehounds and Steve Nash added 15 points and 10 as sists to give Phoenix its second nine-game winning streak this season. The Suns have won 18 of 19 and eight straight on the road, one short of the team record.

Andre Miller had 23 points and 11 assists, and Kenyon Martin added 22 points and 11 rebounds for Denver, which played without starters Carmelo Anthony and Marcus Camby.

Grizzlies 82, Lakers 72: Shane Battier had 17 points. Mike Miller scored five in the final 2:46 and Memphis beat the Lakers at Los Angeles for the first time after 18 losses Kobe Bryant had 11 points, eight assists and six re-

bounds. The Lakers shot 31.9 percent from the field, including 5-for-28 from three-point range, and didn't make a field goal in the final 6:52.

Wizards 103, Warriors 101: Gilbert Arenas drove the length of the floor, got past top Golden State defender Mickael Pietrus and scored an acrobatic layup with less than a second left to lift visiting Washington.

Arenas burned his former team for 29 points seven rebounds and five assists as the Wizards held on despite blowing a 14-point lead in the second

NBA scoreboard

Eactorn Conformed

Lasterii Cu	IIIC	CI	ICC							
Atlantic Division										
W L Pct GB										
New York	13	11	.542	-	i					
Boston	11	12	.478	11/2						
Philadelphia	10	14	.417	3						
Toronto	9	18	.333	51/2						
New Jersey	7	16	.304	51/2						
Southeast					-					
Miami	19	7	.731	-						
Washington	14	9	.609	31/2						
Orlando	14	10	.583	4						
Charlotte	6	14	.300	10						
Atlanta	4	20	.167	14						
Central Di										
Cleveland	14	10	.583	-						
Detroit	12	11	.522	11/2						
Indiana	12	11	.522	11/2						
Chicago	8	15	.348	51/2						
Milwaukee	6	15	.286	61/2						

Western Co	nte	rei	ıce	
Southwest	Divis	ion		
	w	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	20	5	.800	-
Dallas	16	9	.640	4
Houston			.480	8
Memphis			.444	
New Orleans		21	.087	17
Northwest I				
Seattle	18	- 5	.783	-
Minnesota			.652	3
Denver			.520	6
Portland			.500	61/2
Utah			.423	81/2
Pacific Di				
Phoenix	22	3	.880	_
Sacramento			.696	
L.A. Lakers			.542	
L.A. Clippers			.478	10
Golden State	7		.280	15
Monday's	gam	es		
Utah 103, Philadelphia 1	Ō1			
Houston 114, Toronto 10	12			
Chicago 92, Portland 87				

Procentx 107, Derver 105
Memphis 82, L.A. Lakers 72
Washington 103, Golden State 101
Tuesday's games
Minnesota at Cleveland
New Jersey at Charlotte
Boston at Miami Dallas at New York
Washington at Sacramento
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers
Wednesday's game

Wednesday Utah at Toronto New York at Boston Philadelphia at Indiana San Antonio at Orlando Dallas at Atlanta

Chicago at Detroit Cleveland at New Jer Portland at Milwauk Charlotte at Houston Denver at Seattle Memphis at Golden State New Orleans at L.A. Lakers

Thursday's games Minnesota at San Antonio Memphis at Phoenix Miami at Sacramento Monday

Jazz 103, 76ers 101 UTAH — Harpring 7-12 3-4 17, Boozer 11-15 6-9 28, Radojevic 0-3 0-0, Bell 6-13 2-2 15, Lopez 0-0 0-0 0, Arroyo 4-9 0-0 9, Okur 5-12 10-11 20, Borchardt 0-3 2-2, Giricek 3-7 3-3 9, Elsley 0-2 0-0 0, Snyder 1-1 0-0 3. Totals 37-77 26-31 103.

Elisiy G. 20. 0. S. rsyder 1. 1. 0. 2. 1. Totals 277. PMRADELPHA - [Joudhals 2-9. 2. 2. Williamson 2-4, 3-7. Dislembert 1. 20-4.2, lverson 1. 20-4

Rockets 114. Raptors 102

Rockets 114, Raptors 102
Tokown - Bob 6114 618, Feberson
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103310, Woods 50,000, Mattern 25,951
103510, Woods 50,000, Mattern 25,951
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Bulls 92, Trail Blazers 87

Three-Point Goals—Portland 5-13 (Stoudamire 4-7, Van Exel 1-5, Anderson 0-1), Chicago 4-14 (Gordon 2-2, Dubon 1-2, Hinrich 1-5, Deng 0-2, Nocioni 0-3), Fouled out—None. 4-47 (Dawis 12), Assists—Portland 17 (Van Exel 7), Chicago 24 (Duhon 8), Total fouls—Portland 21, Chicago 22 (Technicals—Portland Defensive Three Second, Patterson, Chicago coach Salles, A—19,022 (2,17), Chicago coach Salles, A—19,022 (2,1

Suns 107, Nuggets 105

Suits 101, Ruggets 109
PHOENIX - Richardson 7:13 34 19, Marion
5:11 0-0 12, Stoudemire 11-16 10-11 32,
Lohnson 4:16 0-8, Rash 6:11-22 15, Barbosa 2:50-0.4 (Outlaw 1:1-13, Jacobsen 2:3
0-8 (Winter 5-5 0-0.1), Ortale 4:51, 16:16 107,
10-18 2-42, Nene 6:13 3-4 19, Buckner 6:11
0-18 2-42, Nene 6:13 3-4 19, Buckner 6:10
12, Miller 9:15 5-5 23, Elson 4:5-0-8,
Boykins 0-1 0-0 0, Russell 4:10 2:2 14, Totals
348 14:18 105

Grizzlies 82, Lakers 72

MEMPHS — Posey 3-10 0-0 6, Gasol 5-18 4-4 14, Wright 0-6 0-0 0, Miller 4-5 0-0 10, Will-iams 4-10 1-1 12, Battler 5-10 4-4 17, D.Jones 2-6 2-3 6, Swift 3-8 0-0 6, Watson 2-6 0-0 5, Humphrey 3-5 0-2 6. Totals 31-84 11-14 82.

Wizards 103, Warriors 101

Wizards 103, Warriors 101
WASHINGTON – 1effres 64 22 22, Jamison
82 22 31,8 Haywood 22 34 7, Hughes 10-18
82 22 31,8 Haywood 22 34 7, Hughes 10-18
82 23, Arena 81 31 11 16 29, Hughes 11-8
82 23, Haywood 22 34 7, Hughes 10-18
82 23 40,8 Hughes 12 4, Hug

Leaders Through Dec. 20 Scoring

ng FG 218 194 FT 190 219 Iverson, Phil.
Bryant, LAL
Nowitzki, Dall.
Stoudemire, Phoe.
James, Clev.
Allen, Sea.
Garnett, Minn.
Duncan, S.A.
McGrady, Hou.
Wade, Mia.
Pierce, Bos.
Arenas, Wash. 24 25 24 23 25 23 24 23 22 23 21 23 23 21 23 23 21 Arenas, Wash. Jefferson, N.J. Redd, Mil. Lewis, Sea. Jamison, Wash. Maggette, LAC 169 173 186 199 133 Francis, Orl. Anthony, Den. 155

O'Neal, Mia. Stoudemire, Phoe. Simmons, LAC Mohammed, N.Y. Nash, Phoe. Mihm, LAL Blount, Bos.

Garnett, M Garnett, Minn. Duncan, S.A. Okafor, Char. Marion, Phoe. O'Neal, Mia. Randolph, Port. K. Thomas, N.Y. Nowitzki, Dall. Odom, LAL

Nach Phoe

Nash, Phoe. Knight, Char. Marbury, N.Y. Tinsley, Ind. Bryant, LAL Iverson, Phil. Wade, Mia. Francis, Orl.

275 156 208 **G** 25 16 24 AVG 11.0 9.8 8.7 7.6 7.4 7.3 7.0 137 177 167 169 166

FGA 345 392 .606 .577 .537 .535 .532

Carter eager to show Nets his best stuff after his first practice with the

The Associated Press

FORT MILL S.C - Vince Carter's strained left Achilles' tendon will keep him from playing Tuesday night when the New Jersey Nets face the Charlotte Bobcats But Carter can't wait to play for

his new team and prove he hasn't lost a step or an inch on his jump. "I'm going to make a lot of people eat their words when it's time," the former Raptor said

Carter was traded from Toronto to New Jersey on Friday for Aaron Williams, Eric Williams, Alonzo Mourning and two conditional first-round picks. The deal was finalized Monday, Mourning probably will be bought out of his contract.

For the 27-year-old Carter, this is a new beginning after 61/2 seasons in Toronto, where he was the face of the franchise

Carter's role with New Jersey will be much different. The Nets are Jason Kidd's team first, then Richard Jefferson's. That doesn't bother five-time All-Star Carter.

"I'm happy with it," Carter said. "I'm just there to be that other guy, that third guy to help out. Now who are you going to worry about more? It's going to be fun."



Orlando Cabrera, above, who helped the Boston Red Sox win their first World Series title since 1918 this season, became expendable when the Red Sox signed free-agent shortstop Edgar Renteria last week.

Cabrera going to Angels; Miller might leave Astros

BY RONALD BLUM The Associated Press

NEW YORK - Orlando Cabrera is joining the Anaheim Angels, and Wade Miller could be leaving the Houston Astros.

On a busy day of deals among players eligible for salary arbitration, Anaheim agreed to a \$32 million, four-year contract with Cabrera. And Miller became a free when Houston failed to offer him a 2005 contract by Monday's midnight deadline.

Also, Minnesota outfielder Jacque Jones agreed to a \$5 million, one-year contract, and Toronto right-hander Justin Speier got a \$4.15 million, two-year agreement.

Forty-one players on rosters weren't offered contracts by the deadline and became free agents. The group included Josh Phelps of Cleveland, Eric Munson of Detroit Scott Schoeneweis of the Chicago White Sox and Alex Cora

of Los Angeles. Among players already free agents, two left-handed relievers agreed to two-year contracts, with Steve Kline getting \$5.5 million from Baltimore and Kent Mercker \$2.6 million from Cincinnati. Los Angeles finalized a \$4 million, two-year deal with left-hander Wilson Alvarez and a \$3.5 million, one-year contract with infielder Jose Valentin. Texas completed its \$1.8 million, two-year deal to re-sign outfielder David Dellucci

On the trade front, San Diego acquired outfielder Dave Roberts from Boston for outfielder Jay Payton, infielder Ramon Vazon minor league right-hander David Pauley and \$2.65 million. "This is a dream come true

said Roberts, who has lived in San Diego County since he was 12. "After winning the World Series you don't think it can get any better, but it has.

Cabrera replaces spunky shortstop David Eckstein, who wasn't offered a contract by the Angels Cabrera was dealt from the Montreal Expos to Boston in July and helped the Red Sox win their first Baseball roundup

1918 "He's a guy who can hit

the ball out of the park, and he can run, too," said Angels General Manager Bill Stoneman, a former Expos executive. "He should give us some more range than David gave us, and a better arm from that posi-

Boston replaced Cabrera last week with two-time Gold Glove winner Edgar Renteria, who left St. Louis to accept a \$40 million, four-year offer from the Red Soy

Miller, who made \$3.4 milli this year, was 7-7 with a 3.35 ERA in 15 starts before a rotator cuff injury sidelined him for the season on June 26. At the time, the right-hander said he thought rest would cure the problem and that he could avoid surgery.

Jones, known for excellent defense, hit .354 with 24 homers and 80 RBIs. The Twins also agreed to one-year deals with second haseman Luis Rivas (\$1,625,000) and designated hitter Matthew LeCroy (\$750,000).

Others who agreed to one-year contracts were: Cleveland second baseman Ronnie Belliard (\$3 million); Cincinnati infielder D'Ange-lo Jimenez (\$2.87 million); Baltimore outfielder Jay Gibbons (\$2.6 million) and pitcher Bruce Chen (\$550,000); Oakland right-hander Chad Bradford (\$1.4 million) and second baseman Mark Ellis (\$400.000); Detroit outfielder Alex Sanchez and catcher Brandon Inge (\$1.35 million each); Expos left-hander Joey Eis-(\$1.04 million) and ander T.J. Tucker chen right-hander (\$657,000); Pittsburgh first baseman Darvle Ward (\$950,000): Chicago Cubs infielder Jose Macias (\$825,000); New York Mets catcher Vance Wilson (\$760,000); Philadelphia left-hander Aaron Fultz (\$550,000); Los Angeles Infletedo Olmedo Saenz (\$650,000) and pitcher Giovanni Carrara (\$550,000). Toronto infielder (\$550,000); Los Angeles infielder (\$550,000); Toronto John McDonald (\$400,000); and St. Louis pitcher Mike Lincoln (\$360,000)

Sources: Johnson trade sent to Selig's office for approval

BY RONALD BLUM The Associated Press

NEW YORK - The three teams in the proposed trade that would send Randy Johnson from Arizona to the New York Yankees signed off on the deal and submitted it to baseball Commissioner Bud Selig for approval.

Paperwork for the deal, which also involves the Los Angeles Dodgers, was sent to Selig at about 2 a.m. Tuesday, two people involved in the complex talks said on the condition of anonymity.

Selig's approval is necessary because more than \$1 million will change hands. The Dodgers are sending the Yankees the money to pay part of left-hander Kazu-hisa Ishii's salary.

Once Selig approves, New York

wants a 72-hour window to negotiate a contract extension with Johnson, The five-time Cv Young Award winner is owed \$16 million in the last year of his con-

Los Angeles would receive right-hander Javier Vazquez from the Vankees along with two top prospects, catcher Dioner Navarro and third baseman Eric Duncan, and the Dodgers would get pitcher Mike Koplove from Arizona. Los Angeles might redeal Vazquez to another team.

Arizona would get outfielder Shawn Green and pitchers Brad Penny, Yhency Brazoban and Brandon Weeden

Johnson and Green have no-trade clauses. Johnson wants to play for the Yankees; Green has not yet waived his right to block a trade

"I've gone through different stages going back to last Friday, Dodgers General Manager Paul DePodesta said Monday night

"At times, I thought it was going to happen and at times I didn't think it would. We're still on a roller-coaster.

In other Yankees news, free-agent center fielder Carlos Beltran was to meet Yankees owner George Steinbrenner on Tuesday in Tampa, Fla

Steinbrenner planned to attend the meeting with Yankees Presi-dent Randy Levine and General Manager Brian Cashman.

Beltran finished the season with the Houston Astros, who would like to re-sign him. It's also possible that the Chicago Cubs and Dodgers could pursue him.

D.C. Council reverses decision, revives Expos' proposed move

BY BRETT ZONGKER The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The proposed move of the Montreal Expos to Washington passed its biggest hurdle Tuesday when the District of Columbia Council reversed course and approved a hallnark financing law that eliminated a provision that threatened to scuttle the deal.

The new law appeared to be acceptable to Major League Base ball, which last week put the move on hold after the council inserted a provision that mandated private financing to cover at least half of the cost of the project, estimated at \$435 million or more

After an amendment was passed calling for Washington and baseball to share the cost for

ity on cost overruns and completion delays, the council voted 10-3 to repeal the so-called "sunset" provision. The council then voted -6 to approve the revised law, which urges private financing but does not require it.

For the Expos' move to Washington to become final, the law must be signed by Mayor Anthony A. Williams, a prominent backer of returning baseball to the canital Raseball Commissioner Bud Selig also must declare arrangements to use RFK Stadium next year are "satisfactory."

As part of the deal, baseball waived its right to compensatory damages for the first year if the 41.000-seat ballpark is finished late. Instead, the renamed Washington Nationals would not have to pay rent for RFK Stadium in

Council Chair Linda W. Cropp said the changes could save the city more than \$193 million. Oth-

ers on the body disagreed. "No one has answered why Major League Baseball can't pay," said Councilman Adrian Fenty, who called it a "horrible

"That's what I keep hearing from residents: Why can't these owners pay their fair share?"

Fenty said. Councilman Jack Evans, who backed baseball from the start,

said it was time to move forward.
"It's fun being the Lone Ranger. It's fun always being the guy against. But at this point in time it's time we come together and get behind this," Evans said.

Crew coach Andrulis gets new deal

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Columbus Crew coach Greg Andrulis will return next season, agreeing to a new contract Monday. The 46-year-old Andrulis was

the league's coach of the year, leading the team to a 12-5-13 record. The Crew lost 2-1 in total goals to the New England Revolution in the two-game Eastern Conference semifinals.

Andrulis became head coach of the Crew six games into the 2001 season

Terms of the deal were not dis-

Price's 17-year run in top 50

of world golf ranking ends JACKSONVILLE, Florida Nick Price of Zimbabwe slipped to No. 51 in the final world rank-ing of 2004, ending the most remarkable run since the official

Sports briefs

ings began in 1986 Price had en in the top 50 for a record

17 consecutive years dating to Greg Norman did it for 15 consecutive years.

The longest active streak — 14 vears — now belongs to Davis Love III, who ended the year at

Grandi wins second giant slalom in three days

FLACHAU, Austria - Canadian Thomas Grandi won his second World Cup giant slalom in three days Tuesday, while American Rode Miller extended his lead in the overall standings with a third-place finish.

Grandi overtook first-round

leader Didier Cuche of Switzerland with a superb second run, finishing in a combined two-leg time of 2 minutes, 15.90 seconds.

Miller stretched his World Cup lead over second-place Benjamin Raich to 352 points.

Gerg wins women's super-G

ST. MORITZ. Switzerland -German veteran Hilde Gerg finally won a race on the course that has given her nothing but fits.

Gerg took the super giant slalom Tuesday for her 20th World Cup victory, completing the Engiadina course in 1 minute, 14.95 seconds, for her second win this season and first at the posh Swiss resort.

son. American Lindsey Kildow dropped to second after Gerg overtook her, finishing in 1:15.32. Germany's Maria Riesch, making a stunning comeback from injury, was third in 1:15.40.

Majerus decides he'd be shortchanging USC

Coach cites health concerns as reason for quickly backing out of job

BY KEN PETERS The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES - At the time. it seemed like a great idea. Then, Rick Majerus thought it through

After making a snap decision to take the Southern California coaching iob last week, Maierus almost as quickly decided he shouldn't.

"Maybe you're married and Jennifer Aniston walks by and she says, 'C'mon, let's go,' " Majerus said, trying to draw a parallel with what he described as being blinded by the dream opportunity to coach the Trojans' bas-

ketball team. Majerus apologized to the school, athletic director Mike Garrett and associate athletic director Daryl Gross on Monday in the room where he was introduced with much fanfare last Wednes day as the coach who would take over the team on April 1.

"I made a mistake. I'd be doing them a disservice and myself a dis-Right service. now, I just can't bring it," a glum Majerus said, citing health concerns for his decision to back out of

the job. Majerus, 56, has had seven heart hypasses and an ongoing with weight, which has been as high as 370 pounds. He also cited health concerns when he

retired as Utah's coach last January after 15 seasons, and has been

working as an analyst for ESPN. He said he decided immediately to take the USC job when he jerus memorial game."

44I made a mistake I'd. he doina them a disservice and muself a disservice Right now, I just can't

bring it.

Rick Majerus

Dec. 13, but had second thoughts as early as last Wednesday night.

"I looked at myself and thought that I was a phony. I realized weren't getting the guy they hired. I'm not fit enough for this job for my standards. They weren't going to get the guy who 18-hour puts in

"I have a fitness issue. It all relates directly to my weight. I've got a

Maierus

problem. And I'm going to try hard to do something about it. ... I don't want to have a Rick Ma-

days,

was offered it on That's not to say he's had any health problems recently.

"I think my health is good for probably anything other than to be an astronaut or a coach," he said, "I swam a mile and a quarter this morning just because I was so anxiety-ridden."

Assistant Jim Saia, made the interim head coach after Henry Bibby was fired four games into the season, will remain in the post for the rest of this season, Garrett

Garrett said the search for a coach will resume, although he has set no timetable

Majerus, who plans to return to his ESPN job, guided Utah to the NCAA title game in 1998, losing to Kentucky, one of the Utes' 10 NCAA tournament appearances during his tenure

Considered among the top candidates are Pepperdine coach Paul Westphal, a former USC star, and former Iowa State and Chicago Bulls coach Tim Floyd.



LOS ANGELES TIMES/AF

Rick Majerus announced on Monday he is backing out as Southern California's men's basketball coach less than a week after accepting the position. Majerus said he realized his health wouldn't allow him to put in the long work days he has in the past.

No. 7 Syracuse prevails despite Cornell's 15 threes

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Syracuse has 10 wins and just one loss numbers that don't impress coach Jim Boeheim.

The seventh-ranked Orange allowed a Carrier Dome-record 15 three-pointers in an 82-69 victory over Cornell on Monday night.

"If we don't change, it'll be evi-dent to everybody," said Boeheim, whose 2-3 zone defense has been the staple of a program that won the 2003 national champion-

"We're just not there," he said "We can still win a game like this when we don't defend the three. but we're going to come to a time

The Orange allowed that many threes only once before - in a 96-92 victory over Southern Illinois in the Midwest Regional semifinals in the 1995 NCAA tournament

Syracuse was able to beat the Big Red (3-6) for the 28th consecutive time by using a press to force 17 turnovers, 11 on steals, in the second half.

The trick now is for the Orange to play the whole game the way they did the second half.

"We have to play intense," said Hakim Warrick, who had 19 points and 10 rebounds while fighting through double- and triple-teams all game. "The guys that have been here as leaders have to go out there and start the game with intensity and the guys coming off the bench will follow. It's something we have to do set the tempo

The last time Cornell beat Syracuse was on Dec. 4. 1968 — or eight years before Boeheim became head coach at his alma

Cornell trailed 36-35 at halftime on Monday and was dream-

AP Men's Top 25

ing of an upset every time somebody hit from long range.

"We were excited at the end of the first half," said senior guard Cody Toppert, who was 7-for-10 from three-point range and had 23 points and seven assists. "We knew we were in the game. We wanted to come out and slow it up in the second half and maintain our poise."

The Orange, whose only loss was to No. 3 Oklahoma State, scored 28 points off Cornell's 23 turnovers

"Our fullcourt pressure was the best we've played all year," Boeheim said. "We really did a good job and forced a lot of turnovers for some easy baskets. That was the difference

Toppert had four turnovers, all in the second half, and junior forward Lenny Collins committed eight turnovers, six after the

"You would love to win a game like this," Cornell coach Steve Donahue said. "I'm disappointed in the way we lost it. We just lost our composure. I thought if we kept our composure in the backcourt that we could have made a nice run and they might get a little tight and things happen

The Big Red were 15-for-24 from three-point range, an eye-opening 62.5 percent. They were within 53-44 after a layup by Ryan Rourke with 11:37 left, but Terrence Roberts then had eight points and a block, Warrick hit a hook off the glass, Gerry Mc-Namara scored on a driving layup, and Josh Pace hit a runner in the lane after a turnover to boost the lead to 66-49 with 6:23

"We just need to play hard and

dominate teams," said Roberts. who had a career-high 16 points, all in the second half. "We have to concentrate, play every team like it's a Big East championship or NCAA tournament game. Defensively, we're playing horribly right now.

Cornell made seven three-pointers and only one layup over the final 9:14, but never got closer than 12 points

McNamara, the Orange's second-leading scorer with a 14.8 average, landed awkwardly after taking a shot and sprained his left ankle with 4:23 remaining in the first half. He played 11 minutes in the second, didn't seem hampered by the injury, and finished with eight points and four assists.

No. 21 Mississippi St. 104, Florida A&M 80: Lawrence Roberts scored 25 points and Winsome Frazier added 24 for the Bulldogs (10-2), who won their fourth straight. Shane Power added 18 points for Mississippi State, which shot 53 percent from the field and led by as many as 31.

Tony Tate had 17 points for the Rattlers (2-6), who played their eighth of nine straight road games to start the season. This was their third against a ranked team as they lost to No. 1 Illinois and No. 23 Michigan State by an average of 31.5 points.

No. 22 Cincinnati 95, Jackson St. 43: Eric Hicks had 18 points and freshman reserve Roy Bright had a career-high 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Bearcats, who improved to 8-0 for the fifth time in the last 10 seasons. Coach Bob Huggins got his 550th career win improving his record at Cincinnati to 382-119 in 16 seasons.

Antonio Williams-Parker had 12 points for the visiting Tigers (3-8), who shot 23.9 percent from the field and committed 24 turn-



Syracuse's Hakim Warrick had 19 points and 10 rebounds Monday night as the Orange defeated Cornell 82-69 in Syracuse, N.Y.



Panthers in the Fiesta Bowl against Utah on Jan. 1. Harris has been Pitt's coach for eight years, but his contract was not renewed by the school

He hasn't been selfish about any-

thing he's been all about the

is the best for a Pitt coach over a

three-year span since Jackie Sher-

rill's teams went 33-3 from 1979-81. Still, athletic director

Jeff Long said last week he

couldn't say he was "disappoint-

ed" Harris is departing.

Long and Harris were not

mid-October when the coach's

former agent demanded the

school give Harris a new contract

thers assistant coach Sal Sunseri,

a former Pitt assistant, on Mon-

day and is winding down his

search for Harris' replacement

Among those interviewed were

Oklahoma assistant coach Bo Peli-

ni, Baltimore Ravens assistant Matt Cavanaugh, New York Gi-

Long interviewed Carolina Pan-

or let him seek another job.

and Long was angered in

Harris' 25-12 record since 2002

team and we appreciate that

Stanford-bound Harris stays committed to Pitt

By ALAN ROBINSON The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH - Pitt quarterback Tyler Palko clearly isn't happy with the Panthers' pending

coaching change, saying it "stinks." Coach Walt Harris doesn't seem all that thrilled with it, either,

Harris, allowed to leave for Stanford last week in a move some players essentially consider a firing, acknowledged it is an emotional time as he prepares to coach the No. 19 Panthers in the Fiesta Bowl against No. 5 Utah on Jan 1

"Sure." Harris said Monday night. "I'm trying to act like it isn't, I guess because I think that's probably the way you're supposed to act. We were down at City Council today for University of Pittsburgh Football Day, and it is very emotional. I spent eight years trying to rebuild this foothall program and I think we accomplished that."

Asked if he wished he were staying, Harris said, "I think those questions are, unfortunately behind us now I do love these players. I have told them how much they meant to me, and that life goes on."

about Harris' departure, especial-ly Palko, who unsuccessfully lobbied Pitt's administration to give Harris a new contract. Harris was signed through 2006, but the school said the contract wouldn't be extended — an awkward situation that all but guaranteed a coaching change.

"It's a business and it's cut-throat and it stinks," said Palko. the son of a Pittsburgh-area high school coach. "But being around it my whole life, you understand this is part of the job



Louisville's Petrino signs \$1 million-a-year contract

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Louisville football coach Bobby Petrino signed a contract Tuesday that will pay him \$1 million a year and a \$100,000 bonus if the Cardinals win the national championship.

The 43-year-old Petrino was making \$550,000 a year under his old contract. The new deal adds a \$50,000 bonus if the Cardinals reach the Bowl Championship Series title game and another \$50,000 if the Cardinals win it.

Louisville will join the Big East next season. The Cardinals were not eligible to automatically qualify for the BCS as members of Conference USA

"That's what our goal is," Petrino said of the BCS.

"It's certainly something that's out there for us and something we're committed to getting done.' The seventh-ranked Car-

dinals (10-1) earned the highest ranking in school history and led the nation in points and yards per game. Petrino has been men-tioned as a candidate for several major coaching jobs in the past month, but assured members of Louis-

ville's athletics association board Tuesday morning that does not intend to leave. The new contract, like the old one, runs through the 2010 season. Petrino will earn a \$1 million bonus

Petrino

if he stays through the 2007 season. "I'm looking forward to the upcoming years," he said. "This is the place I want to be, this is the place my family wants to be. We're looking forward to the

Louisville athletic director Tom Jurich expects Petrino's name to be mentioned when high-profile jobs open

"There are certainly schools out there that have more money than us." Jurich said, "But we're going to do everything in our power to keep everything sta-

The Cardinals play No. 10 Boise State (11-0) in the Liberty Bowl on Dec. 31.

Ohio State suspends QB Smith for Alamo Bowl

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith was suspended on Monday for violating team and NCAA rules and will not play in next week's Alamo Bowl Coach Jim Tressel would not say what Smith did

or when the violation occurred, but said the university became aware of the problem on Thursday.

briefs

"Obviously, he feels terrible that he didn't take care of his responsibilities," Tressel said

Smith, a sophomore, will not travel with the team to San Antonio for the Dec 29 game against

Justin Zwick, a sophomore, will start. He had

been the starter until he lost the job after mildly sep arating his left (non-throwing) shoulder in the sixth game of the season "I am aware of what is expected, both on and off

the field, at Ohio State and I have fallen short of those expectations." Smith said in a statement.

TB Davis among three Volunteers academically ineligible for Cotton Bowl

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - Tennessee senior tailback Jabari Davis will not travel to the Cotton Bowl because he failed to meet academic requirements.

Davis' playing time decreased dramatically this eason. He had 587 yards as a sophomore and 565 last season and only 34 yards on 18 carries this year.
Receiver Derrick Tinsley and linebacker Marvin Mitchell, both out for the season with injuries, also were ruled ineligible for the game against Texas

Memphis gives West contract extension

MEMPHIS, Tenn. - Memphis coach Tommy West agreed to a one-year contract extension after leading the Tigers to back-to-back bowl games for the first time in the program's history.

West received the extension Monday while in Mo-bile, Ala., where the Tigers (8-3) play Bowling

Green in the GMAC Bowl on Wednesday "I've made it very clear that this is what I wanted to happen," West said. "I'm really enthused and excited it's going to work out the way we wanted it to

work out. West's new contract runs through 2009 and raises

his income to \$800,000 a year. Memphis has won eight or more games two sea-

sons in a row for the first time in 40 years.

Reserve Texas RB suspended after arrest

AUSTIN - Texas reserve running back Erik Hardeman, who had not played this season because of academic problems, has been suspended indefinitely from the team after a felony arrest on a drug charge. Police say they found about 20 grams of cocaine in a car Hardeman was riding in last week.

According to Austin police, Hardeman was charged with felony possession of a controlled substance on Dec. 14. The second degree felony charge carries a penalty of two to 20 years in prison.

UAB warms up to playing Hawaii

BY JAYMES SONG

The Associated Press

HONOLULU - Alabama-Bir mingham wants to accomplish something seven teams failed to do this season: come to the islands and beat Hawaii

So spending a week in paradise before facing the Warriors in Friday's Hawaii Bowl might not sound like a good idea, but it's just what UAB football coach Watson Brown says is needed as the Blazers prepare for their first-ever postseason game

"I think it's easier to come here as a bowl team than just a team playing them in a two-day time frame," he said. "In two days, the players are worn out from walking the beach. In a bowl, they wear themselves out in the first couple days and maybe they'll calm down in the last three or four and get focused and get their legs back and be ready to play.

The Blazers (7-4) arrived here Saturday to get six days of prac-tice in at Aloha Stadium before the bowl game against the Warriors (7-5), who recorded all of their wins at home

Brown said the early arrival has helped players adjust to the four-hour time difference, the tropical climate and the distractions of Waikiki

"The key is when you're doing your work, focus on work. When it's play time, make sure vou're representing the university but have a good time," he said. "If they don't focus in practice and meetings, we'll get beat Friday.'

The Hawaii Bowl, which matches up Western Athletic Conference and Conference USA teams. is actually considered a neutral bowl site. Both teams are staying in a Waikiki beachside hotel, just a couple miles from the University of Hawaii campus.

'We're just as distracted as they are," said Abraham Elimimian, Hawaii's all-WAC cornerback.

But Brown said there's nothing neutral about playing Hawaii at Aloha Stadium, where the War-riors' offense averages 42.8 points and 472.6 yards per game. Hawaii averaged just 19 points and 344.8 yards on the road

"We're the only team in the bowls playing an away game," he

But Brown and his players aren't complaining.

"In Birmingham, it's about 25 degrees and cold," UAB quarter-back Darrell Hackney said. 'Here, we're in tank tops and shorts all day. Now we're adjusted to the heat and we're ready to go."



'I think when it happened, it

was (a distraction)," third-team All-America tackle Rob Petitti said. "Now, we have our eye on the bull's-eye. Coach Harris said he wanted to coach us in a bowl game and wants to go out with a win, and I want to go out with a win. So we need to go and win



Raiders' Woodson arrested for public intoxication

ALAMEDA, Calif. - Four-time Pro Bowl cornerback Charles Woodson and safety Marques



Anderson were arrested early Monday for investigation of briefs public intoxication following

the Raiders' victory over the Tennessee Titans The Oakland Police Depart-

ment said the players were arrested at 4:20 a.m. PST in downtown Oakland after refusing to leave the back seat of a woman's car. Both were jailed briefly, police spokeswoman Danielle Ashford said.

"Apparently what happened, an officer in our transportation section was flagged down by a woman who said the men were in the back of her car and wouldn't get out," said Ashford, who was uncertain whether the players knew the woman. "They were very uncooperative. They had problems maintaining their balance, bloodshot watery eyes and had a strong odor of alcohol. They were acting in a belligerent man-

Woodson, 28, and Anderson 25. were booked into Oakland City Jail, Bail is not required for the misdemeanor offense. Ashford said, but Anderson had to post \$5,000 because of an outstanding traffic violation. Both were released between 8 and 9 Ashford didn't know when the

players would appear in court. "It's a situation where you'd like your guys to not be in that sitnation" said coach Nory Turner who has not spoken with Woodson or Anderson since the incident. "The thing we always talk about, those hours are where

problems turn up. That's how you avoid them, by staying out of those situations. Again, I don't know a lot about exactly what happened, so I'd prefer not to comment on it until I do.

Woodson, designated as the Raiders' franchise player in February, didn't play during the 40-35 victory over the Titans because of an injured knee, but hustled through the locker room high-fiving teammates afterward.

He held out for four months trying the get a more lucrative contract but insisted in September there's more to be concerned with than a long-term deal. Such a deal could be in jeonardy

He signed a one-year tender for \$8.782 million after missing 33 days of training camp. Woodson has 74 tackles, 21/2 sacks and two forced fumbles this season.

He hadn't missed a game since being suspended and sent home by former coach Bill Callahan for the final game last season at San Diego for missing curfew

Turner hasn't had any significant issues with Woodson. Anderson was acquired in a

NFL injury update

to prominent NFL players, fol-team's prognosis. (See Fri-on for complete injury report e) questionable. ahawks: QB Matt Hasselbeck ow) questionable; LB Chad Brown (elbow) questionaure, (foot) expected to play. Titans: RB Chris Brown (foot) will miss

September trade with Green Bay

McGahee's status uncertain after Rills RR hurts knee

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Running back Willis McGahee has a hyperextended and bruised right knee that could prevent him from playing in Buffalo's game Sunday at San Francisco.
Tests conducted Monday indi-

cated the running back will not require surgery, McGahee's agent, Drew Rosenhaus, told The Associated Press

"It's great news," Rosenhaus said. "It's not something that will keep him out an extended period of time, but we don't know about

this week ' Coach Mike Mularkey would only list McGahee as day to day, declining to discuss the severity

McGahee was hurt when he stumbled and landed awkwardly while catching a swing pass in the second quarter of Buffalo's 33-17 win at Cincinnati on Sunday.

The injury is not to McGahee's left knee, the one he tore in his final college outing for the University of Miami in the 2003 national championship game

Ramsey will begin next season as Redskins' starting QB

ASHBURN, Va. - Patrick Ramsev has already won next season's quarterbacks competition for the Washington Redskins

Coach Joe Gibbs said Monday that Ramsey will be the starter to begin the 2005 season, and he expects Mark Brunell to remain with the team as a high-priced backup.

"We're starting with Patrick," Gibbs said. "That's who we're going with. He's our guy. We're hoping he continues to progress.

Ramsey has completed 65 percent of his passes, with five touchdowns and three interceptions and an 83.3 rating in five starts since replacing Brunell. The Redskins are 2-3 in those games, losing to Philadelphia twice and Pittsburgh.

"When somebody goes in and starts playing good, the way I look at it, he's earned the right,' said. "That started from the first day he went in there and started playing good. I'm kind of reluctant to pull guys in and out, so I kind of give him a shot and we're going until something would happen to tell me that, hey, we need to make a change.

The Redskins paid a high price for Brunell in the offseason, trading a third-round draft pick to

signing him to a seven-year, \$43 million contract with an \$8.6 million signing bonus.

Martz denies he's resigning

ST. LOUIS - As bleak as the situation looks, Rams coach Mike Martz isn't giving up.

Martz, whose fifth season with the team has been disastrous, on Monday had a strong rebuttal to an ESPN report he might consider quitting. The Rams were among the preseason NFC favorites after going 12-4 last year, but are 6-8

'I would never resign from this job," Martz said. "I love this job and I would never leave these guys. We've got a real solid crew of young players and it's going to eventually be a terrific team, and I'm not going to ever walk away from something like that." Martz has two years left on a

contract that pays him \$3.5 million annually.

"I coach because I want to coach, and I love being here, Martz said. "That hasn't changed. We're going to forge on and get this thing back up and running the way it should be."

Martz is 51-32, including playoff games. He was the offensive coordinator in 1999, when the Rams won their first Super Bowl. He led the Rams to a 14-2 record and a Super Bowl loss in 2002.

Del Rio defends Darius' hit that KO'd Ferguson

BY MARK LONG The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Jacksonville coach Jack Del Rio defended hard-hitting safety Donovin Darius on Monday, saying he never intended to hart Robert Ferguson with a clothesline tackle that put the Green Bay receiver in the hospital.

Del Rio said he expected Darius to be fined but not suspended for the shot that temporarily paralyzed Ferguson and knocked him unconscious Sunday 'It was a nasty shot, but I don't believe his intent

was to headhunt the guy," Del Rio said. Ferguson was taken off the field on a stretcher

and temporarily paralyzed below the waist following the hit. He regained feeling and movement on his way to the hospital, where he spent Sunday night. He will remain there at least one more night for tests and observation

"They gave no indication that it's career-threatening. But I don't know if you can make that evaluation less than 24 hours" later. Packers coach Mike Sherman said, "All signs indicate that he's going to be fine.' Ferguson was experiencing numbness on his left

side a day after getting hurt, said Eric Armstead, director of player development for EO Sports Management, the agency that represents Ferguson As Ferguson made a leaping, 31-yard catch at mid-

field, Darius hit the defenseless receiver across the neck with a left forearm. The shot ripped off Ferguson's helmet, stunned the

crowd at Lambeau Field and infuriated the Packers with 4:41 remaining in a 28-25 loss to the Jaguars. Darius was flagged 15 yards for unsportsmanlike

conduct and ejected by referee Ed Hochuli. "He plays a physical brand of football, but he plays within the rules," Del Rio said. "He did not go



Jacksonville's Donovin Darius (20) was ejected during Sunday's game for this clothesline hit on Green Bay receiver Robert Ferguson, who was knocked unconscious and temporarily paralyzed below the waist. Ferguson is expected to fully recover.

helmet to helmet. He did not project himself or launch himself into the guy. He attempted to club at the football and ended up clubbing the guy in the head. It should be flagged and it was. I'm sure it will be fined and it should be.

"If he really wanted to hurt the guy, he would launch himself or he would go helmet on helmet and really kill the guy

Sherman called the hit "a cheap shot," and some players said there probably would have been retaliation had Darius stayed in the game.

AP Sports Writer Arnie Stapleton in Green Bay, Wis., contributed to this story.

Owens: Star WR targets Super Bowl for return

OWENS, FROM BACK PAGE

"He's a great player, but can the offense go on? Absolutely," coach Andy Reid said Monday. "We have some pretty good players on this offensive unit, so it'll still function and do very well this week." But without Owens, the Eagles

will be left with the same lackluster receiving corps that has disap peared when needed in NFC title games Freddie Mitchell or Greg Lewis could join Todd Pinkston as the other starting wideout Those three have a combined 60 catches for 1,073 yards

Pinkston has an injured knee Reid said the Eagles will activate wide receiver Billy McMullen. Running back Brian Westbrook. who missed the playoffs last year, will also get more looks.

Owens, who has 77 catches for 1.200 vards and a team-record 14 touchdowns, also has a fracture a few inches below his knee. Head trainer Rick Burkholder said the fracture is not as serious, and can heal without surgery.

Owens will have surgery on his ankle Wednesday and has only an outside shot to be ready to play in the Super Bowl on Feb. 6.

"We're talking about playing in one game that he's never played in before," Burkholder said. "He could do it safely."

Owens had an MRI at the Ea-

gles' complex Monday morning. and complained of pain in his lower leg. He then saw an ankle specialist in Baltimore. Tests revealed a sprained deltoid liga-

'I went down there optimistic, hoping for the best, and I got the worst of news," Owens said. "Things happen. You've just got to move on from it '

Owens still planned to play in Jacksonville, Fla., site of Super Bowl - which the Eagles have never won.

They will probably have to put me in a straitjacket," he said "Other than that, I feel overwhelmingly confident that they can win the two playoff games, the championship, obviously. Depending on how my rehab process goes, if I am able to go, God willing, then I am going to give it a shot

Owens was hurt on the second play of the third quarter of Philadelphia's win over Dallas on Sunday when he was dragged down from behind by Roy Williams on a 20-yard reception. Owens immediately grabbed the back of his leg, which was bent backward.

The Eagles finished first in the conference three straight years. but couldn't take advantage of playing at home in the past two NFC championship games, losing to Tampa Bay and Carolina. The Eagles also lost in the NFC title game in 2002, in St. Louis.



Lions holder Nick Harris lays on the ball after being tackled by Vikings cornerback Terrence Shaw on an extra point attempt. The point would have tied the game with 12 seconds left, but Minnesota won 28-27.

Break has Vikings snapping to attention

BY DAVE CAMPBELL

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings, in danger of watching their season come completely undone, finally got the big break they desperately needed.

"You take the wins any way you can get them," coach Mike Tice said Monday, less than 24 hours after a bad snap by Detroit's Don Muhlbach prevented the Lions from attempting the game-tying extra point with 8 seconds left and gave the Vikings a wild 28-27 victory.

A little more than three hours after that improbable finish, Green Bay (8-6) lost at home to Jacksonville and fell back into a tie for first place with Minnesota in the NFC North.

That created a colossal matchup at the Metrodome for Friday afternoon, pitting the Packers against the Vikings for the division title. Tiebreakers assure that the winner will clinch, regardless of what happens in the regular season's final week.

"We're starting to kind of come back around here," offensive coordinator Scott Linehan said. "Hopefully we're peaking at the right time."

After the offense stalled throughout much of the second half, Daunte Culpepper led two long touchdown drives in the fourth quarter. He was asked, after the game, if the outcome proved that this year's team is different than the one that lost seven of its last 10 and missed the playoffs in 2003.

"I think it does show that," said Culpepper, who passed for 404 yards and three touchdowns. "We just keep fighting all the way till the end, no matter what. We had luck on our side. If you keep fighting, you have to get a break sometime."

Tice recalled a crazy play in last year's loss to the New York Giants that seemed to start the season-ending 3-7 slide. Clinging to a one-point fourth-quarter lead, Minnesota watched a blocked New York punt was ecooped up by the Giants' Wesley Mallard — who ran 20 yards for a first down.

Green Bay at Minnesota 9 p.m. Friday AFN-Sports and Radio

Game time is Central European.

"That kind of snowballed our season last year and put the black cloud over us for a number of weeks," Tice said. "I don't think we've had that feeling at all this year. . . . This team has battled until the end in every game. We haven't always come through

until the end in every game. We haven't always come through with the play to win the game, with a stop to win the game, but we certainly have not got that 'Woe is me' feeling."

Though the Vikings forced three turnovers and held the Lions to 13 points until midway through the fourth quarter, the pass coverage remains a pressing concern. Joey Harrington, booed more than one time on Sunday, passed for a career-high 361 yards after throwing for only 47

against the Packers the week before.

Detroit's offense, now 27th in the league, totaled 463 yards and scored what should have been the tying touchdown by driving 80 yards in less than 1½ minutes.

"We've got to have enough confidence in ourselves defensively and get off the field somehow, some way, no matter what it takes," Tice said.

Getting cornerback Antoine
Winfield (sprained ankle) back
for the Green Bay game will help
a lot. Winfield looked good in a
workout Monday, according to
Tice, and should help relieve the
pressure on Brian Williams and

Terrance Shaw.
Shaw struggled with dehydration and chest congestion, and Williams was worn out from playing defense and three special teams.

Backup Derek Ross struggled again, and safety Corey Chavous was forced to play cornerback in the dime defense on the Lions' final drive.

"I could go on for days about some things that I could have done better — but the bottom line is that we won the game," Chavous said. "That's all that matters to any of us in here right now."

Cardinals have chance to win NFC West at 7-9

BY MEL REISNER
The Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Cardinals may have turned their season around with one game.

The Cardinals, who had lost four straight, emerged from a 31-7 win over St. Louis with a quarterback who has the unquestioned respect of his teammates, without a significant new injury and improbably positioned for a playoff run.

"That was our best game of the year," coach Dennis Green said Monday. "It was good to play a game that you would like to put in a bottle and bring it out whenever you want to."

Arizona, which had given up an average of 338 yards a game during the skid, held the Rams to 185 and denied them an offensive touchdown on their most serious threat thanks to a highlight-reel play by free safety Ifeanyi Ohalete, who punched the ball out of Torry Holt's arms and recovered it in the end zone.

Marshall Faulk gained 22 yards on 10 carries, the Rams' only running plays.

"We were able to take the run away, and that was our goal," said Darnell Dockett.

Green felt the defense was becoming predictable, so Dockett and Ross Kolodziej were used at both defensive tackle and end against the Rams, and defensive end Kyle Vanden Bosch had a prominent role in nickel situations to further mix things up.

St. Louis' only TD came on a 61-yard fumble return by Leonard Little with seconds left in the second quarter.

"We've been waiting for a goose egg all season," Ohalete

No 7-9 team has ever won an NFL division title, but the Cardinals have a decent shot at doing just that. They play the Seahawks in Seattle next week and finish the regular season with Tampa Bay at home.

If Arizona wins out and the Seahawks and Rams lose out, the Cardinals will make history by hosting a playoff game with a losing record. They also retain a longer shot at earning a wild-card berth, but only if Carolina loses at Tampa Bay on Sunday.

"Everything gets kind of exciting in December," Green said. "We're happy to win, because we can be part of that excitement. The game against Seattle is a big game for us."

Green's finally settling on Josh McCown, whose benching for three games coincided with the first three losses in the skid, should strengthen the Cardinals down the stretch.

Both acknowledged that Mc-Cown's time on the bench, although a bitter experience, gave him a different perspective that should translate into more consistent play.



F

Cardinals quarterback Josh McCown (12) celebrates his touchdown with Anquan Boldin during the fourth quarter against the Rams on Sunday.

McCown, who passed for a career-high 307 yards in a 31-28 overtime loss to San Francisco last week, had his best NFL game, throwing for 287 yards and two TDs — both to Larry Fitzgerald — with no interceptions. He also

ran for two scores.

Special teams also were superb. Punter Scott Player had his second straight game averaging more than 50 yards, and Neil

Rackers nailed a 48-yard field goal to improve to 18-for-22. Rackers also extended his NFL-leading total of touchbacks on kickoffs to 19, breaking Joe Nedney's franchise record (17) in

"Neil was a guy who showed potential as a strong-leg guy, but he did not have the consistency that he has right now," Green said.

Linebacker Raynoch Thompson (shoulder) sat out the game, and Green said it might be another week before the former starter is available. Of even more concern is the torn meniscus in left tackle Leonard Davis' left knee.

Davis was considering limiting his practice time to try to get through the end of season before having the cartilage repaired.

Losing the 6-foot-6, 380-pound lineman would be a severe blow because right tackle L.J. Shelton, the team's left tackle the last five years, was placed on injured reserve Dec. 14 with a ligament strain.

NFL playoff scenarios FOR WEEK 15 AFC EAST

New England has clinched divisior title.
New England can clinch first-round bye with: 1) A win next week 2) A tie next week and a San Diego tie.
New York Lets can clinch playoff berth with: 1) A win or tie, OR 2) Buffalo and Batimore lose or tie, OR 3) Buffalo Denver and Jacksonville lose or the Control of the Control o

AFC NORTH
Pittsburgh has clinched division title.
Pittsburgh has clinched division title.
Pittsburgh can clinch homefield advantage throughout playoffs with: 1) A win OR 2) A tie + New England loss next week, OR 3) New England loss next week and indianapolis-San Diego tie.
Pittsburgh can clinch hirst-round bye with: 1) A win or the OR 2) Indianapolis for the OR 2 indianapolis for

Indianapolis has clinched division title.

Jacksonville can clinch playoff berth with: 1) Jacksonville win, plus Buffalo, Battmore, benver lose and Jacksonville clinches, strength of victory tiebreaker over Buffalo, Bättmore and Denver.

AFC WEST.

San Diego has clinched division title.

Philadelphia has clinched division title.

Philadelphia has clinched division title and homefield advantage throughout the playoffs.

Replayorts.

Sreen Bay has clinched a playoff berth of can clinch the division title with a Minnesota can clinch division title ith a win.

Minnesota can clinch playoff berth titl: 1) A te, OR 2) Either St. Louis or

Carolina lose or tie.

NFC SOUTH
Atlanta has clinched division title and a lars round bye.
Carolina can clinch playoff berth with:
1) A win + St. Louis loss + New Orleans loss or tie + Seattle

Carolina can clinicip playon berth with:
1 A win + St. Louis loss + New Orleans
oss or tie + Chicago loss or tie + Seattle
win + Dallas tie.

NEC WEST

Seattle can clinch division title with: 1)
A win and a St. Louis loss or tie, OR 2) A
le can st. Louis loss or tie, OR 2) A

and a St. Louis loss. Seattle can clinch playoff berth with: A win, OR 2) A tie plus Carolina and w Orleans lose or tie.

Cleveland, Miami, Oakland, San Fran Sco and Tennessee have been elimina I from playoff contention.

NFL scoreboard

American Conference										
East										
	W	L	т	Pct	PF	PA				
v-New England	12	2	0	.857	393	246				
N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	.714	297	206				
Buffalo	8			.571						
Miami		11	0	.214	242	317				
	South									
v-Indianapolis	11	3	0	.786	474	287				
Jacksonville	8			.571						
Houston				.429						
Tennessee	4	10	0	.286	304	383				
	North									
y-Pittsburgh		1	0	.929	323	220				
Baltimore	8			.571						
Cincinnati	6	8	0	.429	313	340				
Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	247	366				
	West									
y-San Diego	11	3	0	.786	391	262				
Denver	8	6	0	.571	311	274				
Kansas City	6	8	0	.429	435	381				
Oakland	5	9	0	.357	284	398				
Motion	National Conference									

National Conference

	East						
	W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA	
vz-Philadelphia	13	ī	0	.929	369	202	
Dallas	- 5	9	ō	357	256	267	
N.Y. Giants	5	9	ŏ	.357			
	- 5			-321	253	300	
Washington	5	9	0	.357	209	234	
South							
v-Atlanta	11	3	0	.786	301	283	
Carolina	- 6	8		429			
New Orleans	6	8	ŏ	429			
	5	9	ŏ	357			
Tampa Bay			U	-321	214	200	
North							
x-Green Bay	8	6	0	.571			
Minnesota	8	6	0	.571	356	340	
Chicago	5	9	ñ	.357			
Detroit	5	á	ŏ	357			
Detroit			U	-351	250	313	
West							
Seattle	7	7	0	.500	319	326	
St. Louis	6	8	0	429	267	356	
Arizona	5	9	0	357	251	291	
San Francisco	5		ñ	.143			
San Francisco		12	U	.143	245	390	

v-Clinched of Wislon :
-Clinched or Onterence
-Clinched or Onterence
- Washington 26, San Francisco 130
- Washington 26, San Francisco 130
- Allanta 34, CacCada 25, San Francisco 130
- Allanta 34, CacCada 25, Sanday 25, games
- Sunday 25, games
- Wislam 27, Sanday 25, Games
- Wislam 27, Sanday 26, Sanday 26

Miami 29, New England 28
Miami 29, New England 28
Miami 29, New England 28
Friday's games
Green Bay at Minnesota
Saturday, Dec. 25
Oakland at Kansas City
Denver at Tennessee
Sunday, Dec. 26
Chicago at Detroit
San Diego at Indianapolis
Baltimore at Pittshurnh

San Diego at Midiahapin Baltimore at Pittsburgh Houston at Jacksonville Atlanta at New Orleans N.Y. Giants at Cincinnati Buffalo at San Francisco New England at N.Y. Jets Arizona at Seattle

Arizona at Seattle Washington at Dallas Carolina at Tampa Bay Cleveland at Miami Monday, Dec. 27 Philadelphia at St. Louis

Doibilli	, 23,	ı aı	ııu	Lo	20	,
New England Miami						7-28 2-29
NE-Faulk 31 kick), 9:59.	pass f	rom E	r Brac	iy i	(Vin	atieri

kick), 9:59.

Mia—Morris 2 run (Mare kick), 6:30.

Second Quarter
NE—Dillon 3 run (Vinatleri kick), 7:01.

Mia—FG Mare 30, 1:52.

Third Quarter
Mia—Minor 1 run (Mare kick), 6:50.

NE—Dillon 2 pass from Brady (Vinatleri kick), 2:07.

Fourth Quarter NE-Graham 2 pass from Brady (Vinatieri kick), 3:59. ick), 3:59. Mia – Morris 1 run (pass failed), 2:07. Mia – Thompson 21 pass from Feeley (pass ailed), 1:23.

A-73.629.					
	NE	Mia			
First downs	24	18			
Total Net Yards	322	231			
Rushes-yards	38-166	20-52			
Passing	156	179			
Punt Returns	2-17	2-87			
Kickoff Returns	6-111	5-139			
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	4-48			
Comp-Att-Int	18-29-4	22-35-0			
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-15	4-19			
Punts	4-42.8	6-45.7			
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	3-1			
Penalties-Yards	4-53	9-67			
Time of Possession	35:06	24:54			
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS					
Rushing-New England	Dillon	26-121.			

nusing—new England, Dillon 26-121, tulk 6-39, Pass 4-8, Brady 2-(minus 2). iami, Morris 9-27, Minor 8-27, Chambers ni. Morris 9-27, Minor e-21, Gillamore-Feeley 2-(minus 2). ssing-New England, Brady 18-29-4-171. ni. Feeley 22-35-0-198. celving-New England, Patten 4-40, teh 3-44, Graham 3-24, Pass 3-17, Dillon Faulk 1-31, Fauria 1-8, Brown 1-6, Miami, ris 6-46, Booker 4-35, McMichael 4-29, mbers 3-24, Thompson 2-31, Gilmore

1-9. I **field goals**—None.

Dolphins rally to stun Patriots

Brady's INTs help Miami out of 11-point hole in 2:07

BY TIM REYNOLDS

The Associated Press

MIAMI - Miami already knew it would be home for the playoffs. The Dolphins might have also ensured that New England will have to win once on the road to reach another Super Bowl.

A.J. Feeley's 21-yard touchdown pass to Derrius Thompson on fourth-and-10 with 1:23 remaining capped Miami's stirring comeback from an 11-point deficit in the final three minutes, sealing a stunning 29-28 victory over the Patriots on Monday night.

Tom Brady had three touchdown passes for New England (12-2), but also had four interceptions - including one that led to Miami's winning score. It was New England's second loss in 29 games, but one that means Pittsburgh needs to win one of its final two games to claim home-field advantage for the AFC playoffs.

Miami improved to 3-11 and avoided - temporarily, perhaps setting a franchise record for losses in a season.

"We could easily have 10 wins right now, but things haven't fall-en for us like they should of," said linebacker Brendon Avanbadeio. who made the pivotal interception in his first career start. "But tonight, who cares what happened the last 13, 14 weeks of the season? We just beat the defend-ing Super Bowl champions. That's all that matters."

Brady's third touchdown pass. a 2-yarder to Daniel Graham with 3:59 left, put the Patriots ahead 28-17 and seemed to wran up a victory for the visitors. Heads drooped on the Miami sideline. and fans who braved an unseasonable 52-degree night in South Florida began making their way to the exit.

They missed the highlight of Miami's season.

Sammy Morris' 1-yard run, his second touchdown of the game, capped a seven-play, 68-yard drive that drew Miami within 28-23 with 2:07 left.

And then Brady made an uncharacteristic mistake. Instead of just taking a sack by Jason Taylor on third down and resigning New England to nunting the ball, he spun and threw blindly upfield

"It's just not a good play, and if we want to win these games, we can't do that," said Brady, who fell to 5-3 against Miami. "We've got to play better and it starts with me. I've got to go out and play better.

Added Taylor: "Was I sur-prised he threw it? I was. But I was glad he did."

Ayanbadejo caught it with ease, and moments later, the Dolphins scored and salvaged some pride from a lost season. Feelev's throw to Thompson was perfect, in a position where only he could catch it - and where defensive

back Troy Brown had no chance. Feeley finished 22-for-35 for 198 vards, one touchdown and for the first time as a Miami start-- no interceptions.

"It's a testament to A.J. Feeley and what he's done for us all year," said safety Sammy Knight, who had two interceptions. "He's had some hard times, some tough



Dolphins defensive end Jason Taylor sacks Patriots quarterback Tom Brady late in the fourth quarter. Miami intercepted Brady four times. including twice in the final three minutes that helped Miami rally.

times, but tonight he hung in there made some crucial throws.

made some crucial plays for us. Brady's fourth interception sailed to Arturo Freeman with 58 seconds left, and Miami ran out the clock.

'We just didn't get it done in any phase of the game," Patriots ch Bill Belichick said. "It certainly wasn't any one play. It was a combination of a lot of things and for the most part, they were in Miami's favor - especially at the end."

The Patriots lost despite a 121-yard rushing performance by Corey Dillon, and they lost after leading at halftime for the first time in 32 games. Dillon ran for one touchdown and caught a pass

from Brady for another. Kevin Faulk also had a touchown catch, a 31-yarder that started the scoring and extended New England's NFL-record streak of games scoring first to 19 - 22 in-

games scoring first to 19—22 In-cluding last year's playoff run. "We can't fault anybody but ourselves," Patriots safety Rod-ney Harrison said. "We had the lead with four minutes to go and we blew it

Travis Minor had a 1-vard scoring run for Miami, which beat New England for the first time in the teams' past five meetings.

Bates shows he can get job done

BY STEVEN WINE

The Associated Press

MIAMI — On the eve of a big job interview, Jim Bates fattened his résumé.

The Miami Dolphins gave their interim coach the strongest possible recommendation Monday night, staging a late comeback to beat the Super Bowl champion New England Patri-

Bates was to interview Tuesday for the job of coaching the Dolphins next season. "The guy is a guy I'd play for any day," quar-terback A.J. Feelev said. "The guys in the lock-

er room adore him." Bates remains a long shot for the job, however. LSU coach Nick Saban has been the front-runner since Dave Wannstedt resigned

last month.

The Dolphins, whose search drew criticism last week from a group that advocates minority hiring, interviewed former Oakland Raiders coach Art Shell on Monday. The Hall of Fame offensive tackle became the NFL's first black coach of the modern era in 1989 with the Raiders

Dolphins President Eddie Jones confirmed meeting with Shell in Fort Lauderdale, Team president Wayne Huizenga and General Manager Rick Spielman also took part in the interview, said Jones, who declined further com-

Bates declined to discuss his impending interview "Right now, I'm just enjoying this victory,

he said. "It is a sweet win to beat the world champions. Saban, who interviewed with Jones and Huizenga last Tuesday in Baton Rouge, La., said

he hasn't talked to the Dolphins since. He said the timetable for a decision on the Miami job isn't his, but his preference would be to wait until after LSU plays Iowa in the Capital One Bowl at Orlando on Jan. 1.

"I personally would like to stay focused on what we're doing here," he said following practice Monday in Baton Rouge. "I would like to discuss the bowl game and I'd like to discuss our team. I'd like to discuss our players. They deserve that. They should be rewarded. Probably the thing that is the most distracting to me is that's not happening, and this seems to be the focus of attention, which

is totally unfair to our team and our players. There's widespread speculation the Dol-phins will offer Saban the job this week. By talking with Shell, the NFL's senior vice presi dent for football operations, Miami complied with a league requirement that teams interview a minority candidate for any coaching va-

The Dolphins have said repeatedly during the search process that they planned to adhere to the requirement.



Dolphins interim coach Jim Bates celebrates Miami's victory over New England on Monday. the night before Bates' interview for the job.

Former New York Giants linebacker Harry Carson complained last week when Saban emerged as the front-runner before anyone else was interviewed. Carson said any subsequent minority candidate would likely be

viewed as a courtesy interview.

Carson is with the Fritz Pollard Alliance, formed last year by a group of coaches, scouts and front-office personnel seeking to promote minority hiring in the NFL. He didn't return a call seeking comment Monday.

AP Sports Writer Mary Foster in New Orleans contribut-



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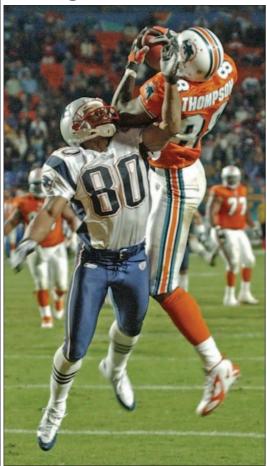
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SPORTS

Majerus apologizes to USC: 'Right now, i just can't bring it,' Page 30

Stunning Fin-ish



Dolphins receiver Derrius Thompson (88) catches a 21-yard, game-winning touchdown pass with 1:23 left in the game as Patriots cornerback Troy Brown (80) defends on Monday. See story on Page 34.



DALLAS MORNING NEWS/F

Eagles receiver Terrell Owens is helped to the locker room after being injured early in the third quarter against Dallas on Sunday. Owens needs surgery on his ankle and will miss the rest of the regular season.

Owens out for playoffs

Injury to key weapon hurts Eagles' shot at Super Bowl

BY DAN GELSTON

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The parade is on hold. Those plane tickets to the Super Bowl are being double-checked to see if they're

Move over Boston. Quit cryin' Chicago. Want to talk about hexes and curses? Move to Philadelphia.

refundable.

Terrell Owens, the playmaking, showboating and game-breaking wide receiver for the Eagles, is out for the rest of the regular season, the playoffs and probably the Super Bowl — if they get that far — with a sprained ankle.

TO has been TKO'd for the year, and suddenly fans and players in Minnesota, Green Bay and Atlanta are smiling.

The Philly faithful, meanwhile, are asking for a double. Yup, this was a two cheesesteak kind of a night.

"I think it's a devastating blow to the Eagles' chances," said fan Jamal Martin as he munched on finger foods at a downtown watering hole. "I don't know if they can recover."

Philly fans pessimistic? That's like asking if the sky is blue. Though long-suffering Eagles fans would never be so foolish to think a trip to the Super Bowl was a lock, even though their team is clearly the best in the NFC this season, it seemed this really

would be their year.

The news hit the Eagles (13-1) on Monday like a sucker punch to the gut—Owens is likely finished and needs surgery, a crippling blow to a team that has lost three straight NFC title games.

"I was looking forward to the playoffs, really trying to get this team to the Super Bowl," Owens said. "I think without me, still, they achieve that goal.

"There's no reason for the city of Philadelphia to get down because I'm not there," he said. "Obviously, my presence will be missed, but we have the guys to get it done."

Perhaps, but it's going to get a whole lot harder without Owens. The NFC East champion Eagles are left without their biggest offensive threat, their most animated player.

SEE OWENS ON PAGE 32

■ Arizona actually has shot to win NFC West, Page 33 ■ Bad snap the good break Vikings needed, Page 33

